Dreamscape
A Human Inquiry into the Land of Dreaming

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Abstract

Until recently, research into dreaming followed the reductionist paradigm within a Freudian framework. This line of enquiry has failed to date to provide a meaningful relationship between neuropsychology and dreaming. As a result, theory development has halted, original therapeutic approaches outside the analytic tradition are scarce, and practitioners are disempowered when confronted with dream material. However, in recent years the concept of consciousness is back on the scientific agenda and the study of the subjective experience of dreaming is once again possible. Eight co-inquirers employed Heron's (1996) co-operative inquiry. We collaboratively explored our experience of dreaming holding seven meetings over six months. Paradoxically, we found that our experiences and understandings were similar and conflicting, mirroring the current debates in dream research. Our findings indicate strong links with waking consciousness, and that dreams are a source of entertainment, insight, problem solving and angst. Our study also highlighted that directing our awareness altered the nature of our dreams and our perceptions. Implications for Counselling Psychology theory, practice and research are discussed. It is argued that intentionality is a key concept and should be incorporated in Counselling Psychology research, theory and practice.

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Structure: This thesis is presented in three parts. Part One is a critical review of the literature on the current positioning of dreaming into the realms of consciousness studies and Counselling Psychology. Part Two is the Research Report and Part Three is the researcher's Critical Appraisal of the research process. References and Appendices can be viewed at the end of the report. Transcripts of six group meetings can be found in the attachment booklet. A summary of the thesis follows.

Search strategy: Throughout the completion of this work literature searches were conducted using the following databases and search engines: Psychinfo, MEDline, PsycARTICLES, Wiley Interscience Search Engine, PsycBOOKS. Additional searches on the University of Wolverhampton's OPAC catalogue, the search engines Google and Google Scholar, Amazon online bookstore, the Centre for Consciousness Studies online, asdreams.org, dreamresearch.net, and the APA journal Dreaming. My membership in online groups was also valuable, such as Carl Jung Depth Psychology, Dreamwork with Toko-pa on Facebook, and Yahoo's Transpersonal Psychology Network.

Searches on known authors in the field have also been conducted. Examples include Chalmers, Hill, Hobson, Jung. In addition, articles' reference lists were scrutinised for articles requiring further consideration.

Keywords included: dream, sleep, REM sleep, consciousness, altered state, awareness, insight, psychotherapy, mental illness, treatment and intervention, counselling, psychology, phenomenology, transpersonal, spirituality, qualitative research, subjectivity, co-operative inquiry.

Articles were screened for date and relevance. Both classic and contemporary texts were used. Where current research was not found, the most recent studies were included.

The structure of the thesis conforms to the format of Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice (App 1).

In a short time the delight of mortals grows, but so too
does it fall to the ground when shaken by a hostile purpose.
Creatures of a day! What is someone? What is no one?
Human is but a dream of a shadow.
Yet, whenever Zeus-given brightness comes,
a shining light rests upon us, and a gentle life.

~Pindar

Part I Literature Review

Dreamscape- The Mysterious Land of Human Experience

1.1 Introduction

Everyone dreams. REM sleep, which is where the majority and most vivid of dreaming occurs, occupies about 25% or 2 hours of a typical 8 hour sleep cycle (Solms, 2000). People from all cultures and across the ages have been preoccupied with dreams and their meanings (Fontana, 1995). Dreaming is thus a major part of human experience, one that should not be ignored when helping people understand themselves (Hill, 2003).

There are currently two widely held views on dreams, shared by the lay population and amongst psychologists (Blagrove, 2009). The first one argues that dreams are meaningful and worthy of exploring as they contain information about our waking lives, our emotions and cognition. The second view advocates that dreaming is a delirium and has little connection with reality. Both views can be traced back to Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1976). Until recently, the second view of dreams as "senseless" prevailed in the scientific and academic world of psychology. There are indications, especially from the fields of consciousness studies and cognitive psychology that this imbalance is slowly changing.

Developments in the study of consciousness in the past two decades (see Tucson conferences 1996- to date, Center for Consciousness Studies, 2014) strongly suggest that it is no longer plausible for science en large and Counselling Psychology in particular to ignore previously unexplored aspects of the human experience. It is argued that dreaming and its phenomenological aspects provide a fertile land for exploration,

since dreams have the potential to illuminate fundamental structures of human thought, living experience and being.

However, the majority of modern day psychological theories of dreaming have focused on physiological findings. It is argued that a purely physiological explanation of dreams does not account for the experience of their subjective aspects. It does not account for their ingenious and creative aspects (Cushway & Sewell, 2013), or for the consistent rules of dream logic (Kahan & LaBerge, 1996). It cannot explain specific phenomena such as recurring and lucid dreams, or what people actually experience of dreams.

Dreaming can play a role in the construction of a psychology of the whole. The implications for Counselling Psychology in particular are huge. As a result of academic psychology's previous inability to incorporate the dreaming state into its theories and applications, therapists are left inadequately equipped to deal with dreams as they appear in the therapy room (Cushway & Sewell, 2013). It is argued that this status quo can be changed by revisiting the phenomenological view of the human being's existence: Being-in-the-world, Heidegger's Dasein (2010), is the area of openness to everything we encounter. Dreams become in this way an integral part of our human experience.

That science has shied away from exploring the actual experience of dreaming, is reflected in, and results from, the state of the science of consciousness as a whole.

1.2 Consciousness: a fertile land for the study of dreams

The concept of consciousness and its altered states was effectively banned from scientific discussion for many decades (Hameroff et al., 1996). This was especially true after the emergence behaviourism and although subsequent developments in cognitive science and neuroscience in the 60s and 70s increased the interest in certain aspects of consciousness, subjectivity was still undermined: the objective reality of inner states was demonstrated instead, since subjectivity itself cannot be measured. Consequently, research into the subjective experience of dreaming was largely neglected (Hill, 2003).

In recent years however, scientists and philosophers from a wide range of fields (psychology, molecular biology, biochemistry and mathematical physics amongst others) acknowledge that the most important question that science faces at the present time is that of consciousness: a problem that transcends traditional boundaries of scientific organization and is becoming a worldwide and highly interdisciplinary phenomenon (Center for Consciousness studies, 2014). In such a climate, the study of dreams is made possible once again.

As a result of these developments, science and philosophy focus more intensely than ever on the nature of human experience and face a daunting chasm between reductive materialism and subjective experience. It seems that the chasm exists between what we understand neurochemically and neurobiologically and what people actually experience of consciousness and, more specifically, of dreaming. As A. Weil (1996) stated "*the brighter we illuminate reality with the light of science, the more we become aware of the surrounding darkness*" (p686).

The question of scientific objectivity becomes more compelling upon considering that doubts about the reductive paradigm are not a new development. William James (1912), Karl Popper and John Eccles (1977), and Charles Sherrington (1951) are amongst the many great philosophers and scientists who have insisted that the reductive view is inadequate to describe reality.

For example James (1912) argued that epistemology should be "radically empirical": Subjective experience should be the primary data to address the totality of human experience and dreams and other unexplored phenomena should not be written off because they "violate known scientific laws".

However, science has largely neglected the study of the phenomenological aspects of dreaming in the previous century, and in turn this had an impact on the study of consciousness. It can be argued that altered states of consciousness constitute a field of study that is crucial to a grasp of consciousness in general, as they can disclose and amplify aspects that may otherwise go unstudied (Tart, 1999; Wilber, 1997; Hameroff & Chopra, 2012).

It is no surprise then, that the Tucson conferences (Toward a Science of Consciousness, 1996 to date, Center for Consciousness Studies, 2014) have shown the need for a conceptual framework within which to understand a broad range of phenomena and experiences including previously unexplored areas: conscious awareness, intentionality (volition), unconscious processes, perception imagery, states of consciousness, innovative problem solving, emotional regulation, and even broader, such as reports of awesome creative insight and religious experiences. Dreams have been implicated in all

these aspects of human experience (see for example Maquet & Ruby, 2004; Nielsen & Lara-Carrasco, 2007; Tart, 1999; Wilber, 1997).

However, such a broad study of experiences poses an epistemological dilemma for science since people's view of reality is determined partly by that reality and partly by the mental processes through which they arrive at that view (Kuhn, 1970). It is the author's view that the study of dreaming has a great part to play in that process, both as a tool for understanding the nature of consciousness and as a means for arriving in that view of reality.

Research on sleep and dreams is indeed suggesting that the influence of the unconscious on how people experience themselves and their environment is far greater than thought, and scientific research itself has to be reassessed in that light (Harman, 1996). As Velmans (1993) argues, science is constructed on the basis of scientists' intersubjectively shared subjective experience.

Expanding, Harman (1996) suggested that emphasis should be placed upon the "unity of experience", in which the parts are understood through the whole. Such a view recognizes the importance of subjective and cultural meanings in *all* human experience: experiences like dreaming are particularly rich in meaning even though they may be ineffable. In this vein there is now novel research yielding some evidence that dreams can indeed be a source of personal insight (Edwards et al., 2013). Therefore, it is no longer plausible to explain away dreaming by reducing it to combinations of simpler experiences, or to physiological and biochemical events. Rather, understanding should come by exploring subjectivity through a partnership between the observer and the phenomenon.

In a classic paper Nagel (1974) raised the deepest question concerning the science of consciousness: "what it is like to be x". This subjective aspect is experience, and has led to the useful distinction between "hard" and "easy" questions (Chalmers, 1996). The "easy" questions are those about the brain mechanisms that appear to support consciousness and its altered states and which can be partially answered by developments in neuroscience and pharmacology (Taylor, 1996). The "hard" questions have been claimed to be "impossible" to answer for science (Searle, 1991) due to the objective third-person nature of science when opposed to the subjective, first-person character of consciousness. However, and considering the vast armoury of phenomenological and subjectivist methods, it would seem that the "hard" questions are once again open to exploration.

Despite this, western reductive science's fundamental inability to introspectively question and reflect upon itself, has led to the exclusion of researching the subjective aspects of dreams in the past. It was thought that knowledge could only be achieved through quantifiable and replicable observations and interventions in the physical world (Hameroff et al., 1996). In stark contrast the mere existence and nature of dreams challenges this assumption: "*Saint Thomas did not allow the Deity the right to contradict himself, which is one of Man's chief pleasures*" (Adams, 1904). This Deity is reflected in and exemplified through reductionist science and its attempts to answer the "easy" questions on dreaming.

It would appear that dream researchers have neglected accounting for subjective experiences, not least because of "physics envy", the hallmark of twentieth century psychology (Leahey, 2001). However, this "Newtonian fantasy" can no longer be maintained, as even physicists are led to adopt concepts that contradict common-sense

views and the basic principles of traditional science: modern physics and quantum mechanics challenge the classical ideal of scientific objectivity and, instead, advocate that observable patterns in nature are intimately connected with patterns in scientists' minds (Capra, 1988; Levy, 2014).

So, although altered states of consciousness and the mysterious and surreal language of dreams may violate Newtonian principles, or exactly because they do, they constitute a field of study crucial to a grasp of consciousness. Thus, the question now facing us is this: Is western thought ready to abandon the belief that reductionist science is a Deity that cannot be contradicted? And if so, are we willing to take on the challenge of answering the "hard" questions? Dealing with the full range of human consciousness, changing the questions we ask and our methods of investigation, may well result in Counselling Psychology dream theories breaking free from the all-consuming Newtonian fantasy.

1.3 Dreams and the "easy" questions

1.3.1 The physiological landscape of sleep

Taylor (1996) advocated that although the deepest questions raised about Consciousness are the "hard" questions, one has to start from the material and the physical in order to answer the mental and the subjective. Thus, physiological research into the dreaming process is an important complement to the psychology of dreams, and, as Cushway and Sewell (2013) argued, it is helpful for every therapist to have some basic knowledge on the subject.

The most important findings on the physiology of sleep and dreaming were made in the 25 years between 1950 and 1975, and were ignited by Aserinsky and Kleitman

discovery of Rapid Eye Movements (REM)[1]. The identification of particular EEG signs with sleep that made it feasible to answer a variety of questions that have previously been a matter of speculation. However, it is doubtful that the technology of the dream laboratory alone can provide all the answers. As Oswald (1980) remarked, knowledge on the function of waking consciousness is so limited, that it is overoptimistic to believe that an understanding of sleeping consciousness can be achieved merely because certain physiological indices have been found of when dreams are likely to occur.

It is still a matter of dispute whether the differences between REM and non-REM dreams are due to the different ways these types of sleep produce dreams, or due to REM dreams being longer than non-REM dreams (Nielsen, 2000; Blagrove, 2009). The debate on REM sleep as the physiological origin of dreaming is by no means the only controversial issue arising upon reviewing the literature on physiology. As dream laboratory researchers admit, neurocognitive research has not produced an answer to why we dream or even why we sleep (Oswald, 1980; Pinel, 2005). Therefore, the great expectations regarding the contribution of sleep and dream physiological studies to the understanding of consciousness remain unfulfilled (Debru, 2014). As it was pointed out back in 1978, "*The hope that one stage of sleep, or a given physiological marker will serve as the sole magic key for vivid dream mentation has all but faded from view*" (Herman et al., 1978, p.92).

In fact, and despite the extensive neurocognitive and experimental research into sleep, dreaming and dream content, two main questions remain unanswered: whether dreaming has a function, and whether dream content can provide us with insight into

[1] For a summary and a discussion of these and more recent findings on the physiology of sleep and dreams, please see Appendix 2.

cognitions and emotions of which we are not consciously aware (Blagrove, 2009; Cushway & Sewell, 2013).

The limitations of reductive science are therefore evident. As previously argued, the "easy" questions are concerned with explaining third-person data associated with dreaming. They are concerned with the brain processes and neurophysiological data that are the traditional material of interest for cognitive psychology and neuroscience. This results in a reductive explanation of the phenomenon of dreaming, in that they explain this high-level phenomenon in terms of lower-level biology.

Subsequently, this model breaks down when it comes to the "hard" questions concerned with explaining first-person data: merely describing and explaining the objective functions does not explain the subjective experience of dreaming. This is still the Cartesian question, and as Chalmers pointed out, "*There is nothing we know more intimately than consciousness, but there is nothing harder to explain*" (1995; p. 200), suggesting that a science of consciousness should take a non-reductive form.

1.3.2 The contemporary debate of the physiological theories of dreaming: Activation-synthesis hypothesis versus Freud

Upon reviewing the literature on dreaming and the current debate into the physiological origins of dreaming, Freud's legacy is inescapable. Freud has been hugely criticized, his theories scrutinized, dropped and adopted time and again (see for example, Grunbaum, 1984; Hobson, 2004; Hurd, 2010; Solms, 2004). After all, Freud is the irrefutable father of psychoanalysis and, as such, of psychology and talking therapies.

Freud's theory that dreams are mental products that can be understood and interpreted is one of the earliest and most influential attempts to explain the content of dreams and to explore their therapeutic potential. Importantly, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1976) introduced the notion that dreaming deserves scientific study and analysis, established the line of questioning that future research was to take, and drew attention to the psychological importance of dreaming (Fontana, 1995).

Freud's inescapable legacy is evident in the current physiological theories of dreaming, as exemplified in research findings by activation-synthesis theorist J.A. Hobson and psychoanalytic theorist M. Solms, the contemporary "giants" of dream science (Center for Consciousness Studies, 2006). Although their debate[2] had shown no signs of resolution in the recent past (Hobson, 2002; Hobson, 2004; Solms, 2004; Solms and Turnbull, 2002), they have both credited Freud for his assumption that any scientific psychology has to be based on brain science (Hobson, 1999; Solms, 2004).

Thus, the starting point of research into the physiology of sleep and dreaming, and arguably its finishing point, is Freud. Hobson and McCarly's (1977) activation-synthesis theory proposes that dream content reflects the random activity of cerebral circuits during REM sleep and the brain's inherent tendency to make sense of and give form to these ambiguous signals. It challenges the traditional Freudian view that dreams are symbolic representations of repressed thoughts or that they focus exclusively on sexual conflict.

[2] "Hobson and Solms are like Thelma and Louise, except they hate eachother, they don't drive off to Grand Canyon, and they happen to be psychiatrists" (Dreamdose, n.d.).

The debate between Hobson and Solms focuses on whether Freud is relevant (Hobson 2002, Hobson, 2004; Hobson & Leonard 2001; Solms, 2004; Solms & Turnbull, 2002)[3]. However, according to Domhoff (2005) their views share several underlying similarities, the main being their assumption that dreaming is a form of psychosis where consciousness is clouded, cognition is illogical and emotion is unstable and uncontrolled. These assumptions can be traced back to Freud, and, arguably, have been disproved by findings of earlier neurophysiological research, as summarized by Pivic (2000). For example, Snyder concluded the "dreaming consciousness" is "*a remarkably faithful replica of waking life*" (1970, p.133).

If there is just one thing that both Solms' and Hobson's research (in)directly advocate, this is probably Freud's status as Psychology's Deity: Freud's ingeniousness and creative theories combined with modern Psychology's inability to overcome his legacy, since theories founded on physiology attempt to either discredit Him or re-establish His views. The result is a pause in non-Freudian theory development and the consequent weakness of non-analytic practitioners to deal with dream material.

In this context of modern day research's difficulty in providing answers to the "easy questions" concerning dreaming -to identify, that is, any meaningful relationship between neurophysiology and dreaming- answers that could bring about consensus between scientists and researchers alike, the need for research into the subjective experience of dreaming is all the more pressing.

The alternative would be to continue to engage in the dominant discourse of the Newtonian fantasy: "*One day, their faith says, a Newton will arise among*

[3] Appendix 3 contains a summary and a discussion of the debate.

psychologists and propound a rigorous theory of behaviour delivering psychology into the promised land of science" (Leahey, 2001, p.24). This is the fantasy that physicists themselves are already abandoning, albeit slowly, as they realise that their methods of analysis and logical thinking can never alone explain the realm of natural phenomena, and that all models and theories are approximate. In the words of Einstein (1921): "*As far as the laws of maths refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality*".

Hobson, who has arguably been the dominant dream researcher in the past decades, founded his reputation on being anti-Freudian and popularised his theory that dreams are the result of random neural firings similar to the neurochemistry responsible for hallucinations. However, and despite the fact that he had originally dismissed the idea that there are deeper, non-physiological meanings in dreams, his more recent academic work advocates the study of subjective experience and supports the notion that dreams may contain therapeutically useful information (Hobson, 2009). He argues that their meaning is not encrypted as Freud would have it, but can nevertheless be useful in understanding one's own psychological state (Hobson & Leonard 2001). Dramatically, Hobson's reassessment was triggered by his experience of suffering a stroke: He lost his ability to sleep for a week, dream for a month, and suffered elaborate hallucinations (Aviv, 2007).

As Flanagan (1996) argues dreams are experiences. As such, any reductive explanation is bound to fail because it disrespects the "feel" and sense of human experience (Chalmers, 2010). Perhaps it was this insight that led Hobson to reconsider his theories when he lost his ability to dream.

Thus, a phenomenological approach in dream research, one that carefully listens to what individuals have to say about the experience of dreaming, can lead to the development of robust theories that in turn can be related to specific neural events and behavioural processes (Diaz, 1996).

1.4 An attempt to consolidate "easy" and "hard" questions

1.4.1 Dreams and the role of Cognitive Psychology: Dream content

Cognitive Psychology had largely ignored research and incorporation of dream data into its theories in the past. Haskell (1986) argues that since 1900, when Freud's the Interpretation of Dreams (1976) was first published, academic psychology has consistently refused to recognise the legitimacy of dream data, reducing them to "not appropriate phenomena for scientific research". Dreams have generally been considered to be irrational and bizarre, and thus lacking in logic and reasoning.

Haskell (1986) also considers that as a result of the Freudian legacy, dreams were relegated to the status of interpretive case studies that were not methodologically controlled. This further reinforced the view that dream data were unreliable and invalid as cognitive data. It was believed that waking thoughts and emotions were so different from dreams that the latter would have little to contribute to cognitive psychology. This view is slowly being abandoned, as it is argued that any adequate model of cognition should be able to explain both waking cognitions and dreams (Webb & Cartwrite, 1978; Domhoff, 2005; Wamsley & Antrobus, 2005). Recently, Wamsley (2013) argued that "*dreams bear a transparent relationship to waking experience*" (p. 9) and that the

content of these subjective experiences can constitute a valuable tool for the cognitive neurosciences.

The physiological findings on sleep and dreaming in the 50s and 60s opened the way for cognitive research into dreaming and, as a result, Content Analysis was born (Hall & Van De Castle, 1966), a theory that relates dream content to the conscious emotional concerns of the dreamer as continuations of waking thoughts. Hall and his successor, W. Domhoff, overcame the problem of subjectivity by conducting "scientific" research into dreaming, scientific in that it is "*completely objective and quantitative*" (dreamresearch.net, n.d.a). Their research provided some interesting findings, such as: people all over the world dream of mostly the same things, the most common emotion is anxiety, men have generally more aggressive feelings, sexual dreams show up 10% of the time, and so on (dreamresearch.net, n.d.b).

Domhoff (2005) argues that dreaming is usually a far more realistic and understandable enactment of interests and concerns than Hobson and Solms assume. Content Analysis findings provide support for the hypothesis that dreaming life is a continuation of waking awareness, however they largely ignore the subjective experience of dreaming and the meanings that individuals attribute to it.

Freud used the term "day residue" to refer to the incorporation of the previous day's events into dreams. This relationship between dream content and waking life events, cognition and emotions is well documented (see for example Kramer, 2007), with bizarreness occurring in about 10 per cent of dreams. It is on this "bizarreness" that Hobson based the claim that dreams are "illusions", unreal, unimportant, meaningless and reducible to cerebral functions (Hobson, 1999).

However, there is some evidence that reflective awareness, volition, choice, intention and deliberation do occur in dreams (Kahan & LaBerge, 1996; 2011; Kozmová & Wolman, 2006). In addition, 4% of REM dreams are lucid, dreams in which one is aware that one is dreaming and is able to direct their attention and attempt different acts of free volition (LaBerge, 2007). It has been estimated that 58% of the population have experienced a lucid dream at least once in their lifetime, with 21% reporting some frequency (Gackenbach, 1984).

Additional evidence that dreams are a continuation of waking experience, include findings on the physiological characteristics of lucid dreaming (LaBerge, 1990), with evidence showing that lucidity is a learnable skill. In fact, a systematic review evaluated the evidence for the effectiveness of known induction techniques (Stumbrys et al., 2012). Further, a recent study claimed to have found a causal relationship between stimulation in the lower gamma band during REM sleep and self-reflective awareness in dreams (Voss et al., 2014), with implications for clinical and commercial uses. It would seem that current cognitive research into dreaming is turning away from the "delirium" hypothesis, which in turn has huge implications for the practice of Counselling Psychology. For example, it has been argued that lucidity might prove to be a useful tool in the treatment of recurrent nightmares and PTSD amongst others (Gavie & Revonsuo, 2010).

1.5 Dreams and the "hard" questions

1.5.1 Psychological dream theories of the century past

Early psychology, before the emergence of behaviourism that undermined subjectivity, attempted to incorporate dreams into its theories and therapeutic practices. Modern day

models of dreamwork, albeit limited, are influenced by these theories (Cushway & Sewell, 2013; Hill, 2003). The most important earliest theories, ones that are still influential in the field of Counselling Psychology, are briefly considered in Appendix 4.

1.5.2 Contemporary Counselling Psychology

Despite the strong debate into the physiological origins of dreaming, or perhaps exactly because of it, modern academic and counselling psychology have largely ignored the study of dreams, with the exception of researchers from a psychoanalytic background (see for example Hill et al., 2013).

The paucity of dream research can partly be explained by the general attitude that dreams, as unobservable by researchers since they are available only to one person, cannot be studied by the intersubjective methods proper to scientific study (Means et al., 1986; Webb and Cartwright, 1978). After all, the "hard" questions pose a seemingly immovable obstacle to the study of Consciousness. As a result, few strategies have developed for using dream material in counselling and clinical situations (Cushway & Sewell, 2013) and little effort is put into training therapists in the use of dream work (Hill, 2003).

So, psychologists and counsellors alike are at a loss when presented with clients' dream material. Means et al. (1986) suggested that two factors play a role in this. Firstly, that dreams are considered mysterious phenomena and therefore interpretation is a complex art and, secondly, that dream work has been linked to particular theoretical orientations, and methods have not been developed outside of these. In addition, there is evidence that even psychodynamic psychotherapists tend to not implement dream models

because of time constraints and other priorities (Hill et al., 2013), suggesting that dream reality is perhaps considered as of lesser importance to waking reality. Therefore, it is argued that research into the subjective experience of dreaming could assist in demystifying this universal phenomenon, place it back into the therapy agenda, and open the way for new theories to develop.

The fact that counselling psychology is unprepared to deal with the experience of dreaming is especially poignant when considering the latest significant developments in the field of cognitive psychology as previously discussed. In addition, there is considerable evidence that link dreaming with problems in living: there is a prevalence of repetitive and frightening dreams among people with drug and alcohol dependence (Hershon, 1977), post-traumatic stress disorders (Kaminer & Lavie, 1991), and major depression and dissociative disorders (Agargun et al., 2003) amongst others. In addition, nightmares are associated with high suicide rates (Sjöström et al., 2007) and their prevalence has been shown to predict future suicide attempts independently of psychopathology symptoms (Sjöström et al., 2009). Therefore, it is plausible that recognition and management of dream disturbances might lead to improvements in well-being (Semiz et al*.,* 2008), and can assist in the identification and management of mental health problems and suicidal ideation.

Given the association of frightening dreams with problems in living and the developments in cognitive theory, interventions that incorporate dream work, albeit limited, are emerging within the cognitive-behavioural paradigm. The aim of these treatments is to replace trauma-based images with more positive ones in order to reduce the associated negative emotion. The use of imagery rehearsal therapy (IRT) has been shown to be effective in reducing disturbing dreams and anxiety (Krakow et al*.,* 2001),

while application of Exposure, Relaxation, and Rescripting Therapy (ERRT) can lead to a decrease in symptoms of depression, PTSD and sleep problems (Davis & Wright, 2007). It is evident that Counselling Psychology can no longer afford to ignore research findings such as these.

Further, the positive aspects of dreams have been emphasized, as dream work can lead to growth and self-development (Cushway & Sewell, 2013), to awareness and insight (Edwards et al., 2013; Hill, 2003; Jung, 1995; Perls, 1971), and dreams can be used as diagnostic and assessment tools (Hill, 2003; Sacks, 1999). There are also indications that the application of lucid dreaming has a great potential to improve one's life in different ways, including providing insights and assisting in problem solving (Schädlich & Erlache, 2012).

Given the wealth of research evidence on the role of dreaming in mental health and the benefits of dream work, it is surprising to find that the attempts to incorporate dreaming into counselling psychology theory and practice are limited. So, although working with dreams has been for many years the prerogative of psychoanalysts and Gestalt therapists, there is a valid argument in that any adequate model of therapy (or cognition) should incorporate both waking cognitions and dreams (Cushway & Sewell, 2013).

This becomes especially poignant when considering the phenomenological foundations of counselling psychology. Phenomenology argues that all phenomena are accessible and manifest, and strive to come into light through exploration and understanding (Sartre, 1948; Husserl, 1970). It seeks the truth by concentrating on immediate experience, shorn of assumptions and presuppositions. Such an approach sheds new

light on the hard questions in the study of consciousness: consciousness cannot be separated from the world. Rather, it is intentional and open towards the phenomena in the world. Dreams, just like any other phenomena, are integral parts of our experience, and do not warrant interpretation in the Freudian sense: “It is the dream itself that tells us its meaning” (Condreau, 1993).

Heidegger’s fundamental concept of Dasein (2010), the act of “being there”, breaks away from the strict confinements of the Hobson/Solms dream debate: Dasein requires choices and resulting actions to define the self. Being human fundamentally means to have the “existential choice”, the inevitable responsibility of every human being for the choices we make. This responsibility can only be avoided at the price of being inauthentic or incongruent and so, as Sartre (1948) puts it, we are indeed condemned to freedom. Thus, in phenomenological terms, consciousness is relational and the emphasis is on our unity with the world. This relatedness of human existence is revealed in dreaming life just as it is in waking life (Young, 2005).

It would seem that the reluctance of counselling psychology to incorporate dream work might partly be because dream work has been linked to psychoanalysis, and partly because of a seeming disconnection from our phenomenological roots. The Hobson-Solms debate of the previous decades and the associated neurophysiological research reinforced the analytical status quo and Freud’s status as a Deity, and, in the process, undermined our confidence as Counselling Psychologists when encountering dream material in the therapy room.

1.6 Future research

The current state of affairs is particularly paradoxical since what most of the present day theories on dreaming share, apart from their Freudian origins, are two common assumptions: that dreams are the creation of the dreamer and so they are personal, and that they reflect (to various degrees) waking life and they are therefore meaningful. For example, although Flanagan (1996) argues that dreams are epiphenomena of sleep, he concludes that their subjective experience is nevertheless revealing and potentially meaningful in the process of self-understanding.

Boss (1963), guided by Heidegger's philosophy, radicalises this argument and argues that dreams *are* an integral part of our being: They are not something we have, "we are our dreaming state" (Boss, 1963, p. 261), and so we have to view them just like any other phenomena: Dreams are openings to be attended and can reveal what matters to us in a privileged way.

In this light, it comes as no surprise that, although scientists disagree as to what extent dreams reflect subconscious desires, dreams do influence people's waking decisions and attitudes (Morewedge & Norton, 2009).

It is evident then, that any reductive explanation of dreaming and, by extension, of consciousness, is bound to fail because it disrespects the "feel" and sense of human experience (Chalmers, 1996). A shift in dream research, from an objectivist approach to one that carefully listens to what individuals have to say about the experience of dreaming, could help demystify this universal phenomenon, and, importantly, could open the way for new theories to develop.

To return to Nagel's (1974) question, it is this subjective aspect of experience that poses a challenge for science: "what is it like to be dreaming" or, else, "how do people experience dreams?"

The phenomenological study of dreaming can have two effects: contribute to the study of consciousness as a whole by illuminating previously unknown qualities, and provide renewed confidence in therapists when encountering dream material in the therapy room and in personal life.

The dream's here still: even when I wake, it is

Without me; as within me; not imagined, felt

~William Shakespeare, *Cymberline*

Part II Research Report

Abstract

Until recently, research into dreaming followed the reductionist paradigm within a Freudian framework. This line of enquiry has failed to date to provide a meaningful relationship between neuropsychology and dreaming. As a result, theory development has halted, original therapeutic approaches outside the analytic tradition are scarce, and practitioners are disempowered when confronted with dream material. However, in recent years the concept of Consciousness is back on the scientific agenda and the study of the subjective experience of dreaming is once again possible. Eight co-inquirers employed Heron's (1996) co-operative inquiry. We collaboratively explored our experience of dreaming through six cycles of action and reflection over six months holding seven meetings. Paradoxically, we found that our experiences and understandings were similar and conflicting, mirroring the current debates in dream research. Our findings indicate strong links with waking consciousness, and that dreams are a source of entertainment, insight, problem solving and angst. Our study also highlighted that directing our awareness altered the nature of our dreams and our perceptions. Implications for Counselling Psychology theory, practice and research are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Co-operative inquiry, phenomenology, dreams, consciousness, intentionality, insight

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

Everyone dreams. REM sleep, which is where the majority and most vivid of dreaming occurs, occupies about 25% or 2 hours of a typical 8 hour sleep cycle (Solms, 2000). Dreaming is thus a major part of our experience, one that should not be ignored when helping people understanding themselves (Hill, 2003).

Developments in the study of consciousness in the past two decades (see Tucson conferences 1996- to date, Center for Consciousness Studies, 2006; 2014) indicate that it is no longer plausible for science en large and Counselling Psychology in particular to ignore previously unexplored aspects of the human experience. Dreaming and its phenomenological aspects provide a fertile land for exploration, since dreams have the potential to illuminate fundamental structures of human thought, lived experience and being.

The implications for Counselling Psychology are huge. As a result of academic psychology's previous inability to incorporate the dreaming state into its theories and applications, therapists are left inadequately equipped to deal with dreams as they appear in the therapy room and in personal life (Cushway & Sewell, 2013).

Science has shied away from exploring the actual experience of dreaming. It is hoped that an inquiry into the subjective aspects of dreaming will illuminate previously unknown qualities and thus play a role in the construction of a psychology of the whole.

Early psychology attempted to incorporate dreams into its theories and therapeutic practices. Freud was the first to draw attention to the psychological importance of dreaming and its therapeutic potential (Fontana, 1995). In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1976) he introduced the notion that dreaming deserves scientific study and analysis and established the line of questioning that future research was to take.

Expanding Freud's theory, Jung (1978) argued that the unconscious is not only the place for self-preservation and sexual drives, but also for higher motivational drives such as creativity and spirituality. Dreams hold the key not only to what is causing problems, but also to what we most need to do to put them right and to develop our full potential as human beings.

Similarly, Perls (1969, 1971) described dreams as the "royal road to integration", and so brought psychoanalytic notions and ideas into the realm of Humanistic Psychotherapy. By concentrating on the "here and now" dreams take the form of existential messages: dream symbolism is a personal creation and is connected with the individual's life experiences.

Boss, guided by Heidegger's Dasein, also stressed the phenomenological aspects of the dreaming experience: A dream is not something we have, it is an aspect of our being, "*we are our dreaming state*" (Boss, 1963, p.261). Dreams show to us what matters to us in a privileged way, and we have to view them in their widest context, which includes the story and the experiential framework of the dreaming person (Cohn, 2003). Just like any other phenomena they should be allowed to show themselves in all their significance: they are openings to be attended, not mysteries to be solved.

In contrast, the majority of psychological theories on dreaming in the following decades concentrated on physiological findings and quantitative research, and in their majority were concerned with Freudian theories (see for example Domhoff, 2005; Hobson, 2002; Hobson & Friston, 2012; Solms, 2000). However, a purely physiological explanation (or one that stems from physiological findings) cannot account for the subjective, ingenious and creative aspects of dreams or for the consistent rules of dream logic (Cushway & Sewell, 2013). It cannot explain specific phenomena such as recurring and lucid dreams, or what people actually experience of dreams.

So, despite the excitement during the first years after the discovery of REM sleep (Aserinsky & Kleitman, 1953), its equation to the physiological correlate of dreaming has been highly controversial (Herman et al., 1978; Ogawa et al., 2002; Pinel, 2005). To the admittance of dream laboratory researchers, it is doubtful that any physiological correlate can provide an understanding of dreaming consciousness (Oswald, 1980), as such research attempts to explain this high-level phenomenon in terms of lower-level biology. In contrast, D.J. Chalmers (2010) argues that a science of consciousness should take a non-reductive form, and calls for projects that take first-person data seriously (Chalmers, 2004).

In accordance, Webb and Cartwright (1978) argued that the intersubjective methods proper to reductionistic science have proven to be inadequate in the study of dreams, not least because dreams are available only to one person and are thus unobservable by researchers.

As a result, Cognitive Psychology had largely ignored research and incorporation of dream data into its theories and applications (Cushway and Sewell, 2013). Adopting

Freudian assumptions, dreams were largely considered to be irrational and bizarre, lacking in logic and reasoning, and thus, "*not appropriate phenomena for scientific research*" (Haskel, 1986).

However, various research findings (Domhoff, 2005; Hobson, 2004; Solms, 2004) support the assumption that dreaming life is a continuation of waking awareness and that dreams are deeply personal and reflect the individual's capacities and tendencies. It is thus slowly recognized that any adequate model of cognition should be able to explain both waking cognitions and dreams (Domhoff, 2010; Wamsley & Antrobus, 2005; Webb & Cartwright, 1978).

Further research findings showed that there is a prevalence of repetitive and frightening dreams among people with drug and alcohol dependence (Hershon, 1977), post-traumatic stress disorders (Kaminer & Lavie, 1991), and major depression and dissociative disorders (Agargun et al., 2003) amongst other. It has been suggested therefore, that recognition and management of dream disturbances might lead to improvements in wellbeing (Semiz et al., 2008).

At the other end of the spectrum, the therapeutic aspects of dreams have also been emphasized, as dream work can lead to growth and self-development (Cushway & Sewell, 2013), and to awareness and insight (Hill, 2003; Jung, 1995; Perls, 1971). It has been highlighted not that dreams can be used as diagnostic and assessment tools (Hill, 2003; Sacks, 1999), and that they deal with matters referring to our essential current and existential concerns (Jaenicke, 1996).

It is evident that Psychology as a whole can no longer afford to ignore the study of dreams. And, although working with dreams has been for many years the prerogative of psychoanalysts and Gestalt therapists, it is argued that any adequate model of therapy should incorporate both waking cognitions and dreams (Cushway & Sewell, 2013).

In particular, Counselling Psychology's phenomenological foundations indicate that dreams, just like any other phenomena, are contents of our experience, and do not warrant interpretation in the Freudian sense. Rather, they are openings to be attended: "It is the dream itself that tells us its meaning" (Condreau, 1993), ones that should not be neglected in treatment.

1.2 Research question

Most theories of dreaming since the birth of psychology, no matter how diverse, share two common assumptions: that dreams are the creation of the dreamer and therefore are personal, and that they reflect (to various degrees) waking life and so they are meaningful (Boss, 1963; Domhoff, 2005; Freud, 1976; Hobson, 2009; Jung, 1978; Perls, 1971; Solms, 2004). Flanagan (1996) for example points out that the subjective experience of dreams is revealing and potentially meaningful in the process of self-understanding. To abuse Nagel's (1974) question, it is this subjective aspect of experience that poses a challenge for science and the present study sets out to explore: "*what is it like to be dreaming*?" In other words, "*how do people experience dreams*?"

Such a question can only be answered by adopting a radical methodology that is at odds with traditional science. Further, the mere existence and nature of dreams challenges the assumption that knowledge can be achieved through quantifiable and replicable observations in the physical world. It challenges reductionistic science's inability to

introspectively question and reflect upon itself. It is therefore believed that a qualitative approach is best positioned to explore the nature of dreams and, in particular, a co-operative inquiry can create the "intersubjective space" (Heron, 1996, p.11) that allows participants to go through cycles of deepening experience and knowledge.

In addition, dreams are rich in meaning, and as such should not be reduced to combinations of simpler experiences, to physiological or biochemical events. As dreams *are* experiences (Boss, 1963; Flanagan, 1996), any reductive explanation is bound to fail since it disrespects the "feel" and sense of human experience (Chalmers, 1996).

Accordingly, the phenomenological foundations of counselling psychology indicate that consciousness is relational and the emphasis is on our unity with the world. This relatedness of human existence is revealed in dreaming life just as it is in waking life (Young, 2005).

Thus, in attempting to explore the subjective experience of dreaming, the author is adopting Jung's position: "*In the living psychic structure, nothing takes place in a mechanical fashion; everything fits into the economy of the whole, relates to the whole*" (1995, p. 274). This, coupled with focusing on the "here and now" as illustrated in humanistic ideas, Perls' (1971) views on dreams as existential messages connected with life experience, and Boss's (1963) argument that Dasein reveals through the act of dreaming ("we are our dreams"), point towards the adoption of a holistic method of inquiry: In co-operative research the co-inquirers cyclically interplay between thinking and experience and are directly touched by the experiences they study (Heron, 1996).

In conclusion, the nature of consciousness itself is subjective, first-person (Searle, 1991) and subjective experience should be the primary data to address the totality of human experience (James, 1912). A truly co-operative inquiry can provide the means to explore subjectivity through a partnership between the observer and the phenomenon of dreaming, and through a partnership between co-researchers. In doing so the current study attempts to break away from the strict confinements of the Hobson/Solms dream debate: what becomes central is our Being-in-the-World (Dasein), in line with counselling psychology's phenomenological foundations as formulated by Heidegger (2010), Husserl (1970), and Sartre (1948). Dreams deal with matters referring to our essential current and existential concerns (Jaenicke, 1996) and constitute openings to be attended when in therapy (Boss, 1963).

1.3 Expected benefits and contributions to Counselling Psychology

The advent of behaviourism, reductive science and the improvements in dream laboratory technology can be seen as some of the reasons why subjectivity was undermined. It is hoped that a cooperative inquiry into the subjective experience of dreaming will help redress the balance and so subtly change the status quo. Such a method cannot be viewed in a vacuum, as it reflects upon itself and acknowledges the political, social and personal effects it has on the participants and their environment.

Further, co-operative inquiry remains faithful to the phenomenological foundations of counselling psychology: consciousness is relational and the emphasis is on our unity with the world, just as Heidegger's concept of Dasein advocates. Being human fundamentally means to have the "existential choice", the inevitable responsibility for the choices we make.

It is hoped that making such choices through the cooperative study on the nature of dreams, will provide insights into the participants/researchers thought, lived experience and being. These insights could in turn inform the construction of a psychology of the whole.

It has long being argued that the phenomenological aspects of alternative states of consciousness are crucial to a grasp of consciousness, as they disclose and amplify aspects that may otherwise go unstudied (Tart, 1999; Wilber, 1997). It is thus hoped that research will contribute to the study of consciousness as a whole by illuminating previously unknown qualities.

Working with dreams has been the prerogative of analysts and Gestalt therapists. However, any adequate model of therapy should incorporate both waking cognitions and dreams (Cushway & Sewell, 2013). Cooperative inquiry may account for the ingenious and creative aspects of dreams and thus highlight their therapeutic potential and shed light into the realms of our world that we are not yet aware of. In addition, it may yield the following benefits:

- Develop methods outside particular theoretical orientations
- Open way for new theories of dreaming to develop
- Provide renewed confidence in therapists when encountering dream material in the therapy room and in personal life
- Provide explanations for consistent logic and explain specific phenomena such as recurring and lucid dreaming
- Explore the limitations of co-operative inquiry and contribute to its development

- Move towards an exchange of ideas that can inform reductionistic science and vice versa
- Contribute towards a theory of the fundamental principles that connect physical processes to conscious experience

Chapter 2: Methodology and Procedure

2.1 Human Inquiry: Research *with* and *for* people rather than *on* people

Co-operative inquiry is a cyclical process. Each cycle consists of four stages with deepening experience and knowledge (Reason and Rowan, 1991).

2.1.2 First stage (First reflection phase)

Choice of topic and research method

The first reflection phase started upon deciding that dreaming is my area of inquiry and continued with the production of the literature review as a piece of work for the University. My decisions were informed by my passion for and commitment to the topic of dreams. In addition, my beliefs and view of the world fit in well with the epistemology, values and ideologies inherent in co-operative inquiry as described by Reason and Rowan (1991). Some of these are briefly considered below:

- Phenomenology: In order to explore subjective knowledge we should come closer to other people and compare it with their subjective knowledge (Maslow, 1966). The mind creatively participates in a given cosmos, and reality is always subjective-objective (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

- Hermeneutics: In research with human beings, I have to rely on my relationships with them and see myself as part of a tradition that I actively change through the act of interpretation (Reason & Rowan, 1991).
- Critical subjectivity: A shift away from objective consciousness to a quality of awareness in which we do not suppress our subjective experience. We raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process (Reason & Heron, 2008).
- Marxism's "emancipatory interest" which seeks to free people not only from the domination of others, but also from the domination of forces which they themselves don't understand (Habermas, 1971).
- Existentialism: The notion that each individual is responsible for giving meaning to life and living it passionately and authentically (Kierkegaard, 1992). This translates in co-operative inquiry into the need for myself to be involved as a whole person, and not hiding behind the role of the researcher.

As Maxwell (1984) argues, the main issue in research is that of human existence: To not only articulate the basic problems we wish to solve, but also to critically assess possible solutions, whilst not losing sight of the promotion of human welfare as the goal. Co-operative inquiry is thus research *with* and *for* people, rather than *on* or *about* people. Similarly, the central focus of Counselling Psychology, and consequently my own clinical practice, is how to improve the lived experience of the individuals that make up our social context (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2003).

Both my personal philosophy and the reviewing the relevant literature on dreaming pointed to a qualitative approach, not least because of the ethical and political implications (see for example Westmarland, 2001 for a summary of the qualitative/quantitative debate). This was fixed very early in the process, and negated

the need to consider operationalizing the study to fit with positivist and quantitative methods (Ponterrotto, 2005).

On the other hand, much of "mainline" qualitative research lies within a constructivist paradigm, which assumes that reality does not exist outside the minds that create and hold it (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This raises the problem of solipsism, which is an ironic problem not only for researching the "Other", but also and primarily for the practicing Counselling Psychologist. In addition, although qualitative methodologies accept the role of the researcher as a central agent, they are still research *about* other people in their own setting. In contrast, Heron (1996) argues that co-operative inquiry is research *with* other people, which lies within the paradigm of "participative reality": There is a given cosmos in which the mind creatively participates and reality is always subjective-objective (Bateson, 1979; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Further, the constructivist position fails to account for experiential knowing, while a methodology that is based on co-operative relations between co-inquirers affirms the value of practical knowing in the service of human flourishing (Heron & Reason, 1997).

In addition, the unilateral research relationship between researcher and researched in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies has been questioned for raising issues of power and control: every design decision imposes personal preferences and values on those being studied and it is thus oppressive and disempowering (Eagley, 1987). On the other hand, co-operative inquiry achieves knowing through active participation without seeking to separate the subject from the object, the knower from the known. The inquiry itself is an "*intersubjective space*" (Heron, 1996, p.11).

Further, co-operative inquiry is person-centered insofar as it focuses on the co-researchers own experience, and assumes that human flourishing is intrinsically worthwhile, in line with Counselling Psychology's principles and values. It is also a wide-ranging science that is in a position to investigate any aspect of the human experience, including dreams.

Other participative methodologies were also briefly considered, such as participatory action research (Tandon, 1989). I found that these approaches tend to over-emphasise the social and political at the expense of the psychological, and in doing so they ignore ways in which groups may be destructive and distort their experience.

To conclude, the choice of topic and the research method was the result of study and reflection on an intellectual/academic level, informed by my personal values, and influenced by deeper psychological factors and beliefs.

Participants and recruitment

In order to maximize the potential for success, careful consideration was initially given in the setting up of the group. I aimed to launch a group of 6-8 participants, including myself. It was important to minimize possibilities of imbalances (Reason, 1994), so thought was given for a good match to exist between my own experiences and interests and those of the group I set up.

Further, the project needed to make sense to potential group members who I envisaged sharing a common passion for dreams, since everyone had to have a say in deciding what questions are to be addressed, how to explore these, get involved in the activity

being researched, and decide together the conclusions that the inquiry might reach (Reason & Heron, 2008).

Therefore, I initially attempted to recruit members by advertising with a likely population, such as local dream groups, alternative therapies networks, University and Adult Education Centres. This search proved fruitless and I moved on to advertise on email lists and relevant groups on social media (such as the Transpersonal Psychology network and the Psychology Postgraduates network). Some interest was shown, but there were geographical restrictions. The use of Skype was considered but dismissed as impractical. At the same time, I advertised through my network of acquaintances and word of mouth.

Advertising and informing potential group members included posters, letters and emails, which outlined the topic, the method of inquiry and invited interested people to join. A sample of an information sheet can be found in Appendix 5. In addition, I held detailed conversations and exchanged ideas and emails with persons who exhibited an interest for the study.

Introductory workshop and open contract

Being the initiator, I planned and arranged an induction meeting with people who expressed an interest in the study. Seven out of the eight people who subsequently took part in the study attended. The induction workshop was used as a means for exploring the different expectations we all brought with us, and work out whether there was a sensible basis for working together. Potential members had the opportunity to discuss the topic, the project as a whole, and to influence the design.

Being the initiator, I explained the process and what was likely to be expected, emphasizing that membership required commitment of time and energy. The topic of dreaming was briefly presented (a verbal summary of the literature review from the initiator's standpoint), followed by questions, discussion and brainstorming on potential topics for exploration. This was the initial "sketching out" of the potential research questions.

It was expected that people would come in with different hopes and fears, as well as with preconceived ideas of research (Reason, 1994), and this was proven accurate. Therefore, ways of how the group might proceed were suggested and the ideas behind cooperative inquiry were explained as follows:

- Logic of method and cycles
- Emphasis on the personal involvement and its demands
- Emphasis on the importance of shared power and responsibility
- Suggest the possibility of people getting upset as their ideas get tested, or as they delve deeply into their psyche and how this will be dealt

The introductory workshop assisted potential co-researchers in making an informed decision of whether to join, and after membership was agreed in principle, discussion included the following:

- A set of propositions the group wished to explore
- The method and actions we wished to undertake to contribute to this exploration
- How actions would be observed and information recorded
- How roles were to be distributed (e.g. rotating leadership)

- Ground rules, practical considerations and confidentiality issues
- How the final written report was to be produced

The workshop concluded the first phase of the inquiry, which primarily involved propositional knowing.

Participant characteristics

The group consisted of eight members in total (including the author), of which five were male and three female. Four were trainee Counselling Psychologists, one was training in Positive Psychology and working in Mental Health, one was training in Art therapy and working in a children's centre, one was a martial arts and yoga instructor, and one had a managerial background and was working in retail. Five were non-British. Co-inquirers are presented in Table 3.1.

Data generation and handling

Commonly, methodology is viewed as a technique for "gathering data" (Harding, 1986) that lies in a ready-made form in the outside world. In contrast, the epistemology behind co-operative inquiry asserts the participative relationship between the knower and the known. So, "data generation" is used in this report to imply that the researchers are "*shaping their experience of the given cosmos*" (Heron, 1996, p. 18).

The inquiry engaged six cycles of action and reflection over a period of six months. Seven meetings were held at pre-arranged sites determined by the group. Four were held on premises belonging to the University of Wolverhampton, one in a public house and two in a coffee shop. The meetings were recorded on a WMA digital voice recorder and were transcribed verbatim apart from the necessity to anonymise identifying

information. The transcription software "Transcriva" was used. Both WMA files and transcripts are on a password-encrypted file at the initiator's premises. Finally, excerpts used in the main body of the thesis exclude "ahs", "erms", "kind of", "like", and repeated or corrected words for ease of reading.

2.1.3 Second stage (first action phase)

This phase involved primarily practical knowing: The group applied the agreed actions to their everyday lives and observed and recorded the outcomes (psychological, physical, interpersonal and transpersonal). Just observing what happens can lead to a better understanding of their experience (Reason and Heron, 2008).

2.1.4 Third Stage (full immersion in stage 2)

Co-researchers became fully immersed in the activities and experiences, so that new practical skills and understandings developed. This phase involved primarily experiential knowing.

2.1.5 Fourth stage (second reflection phase)

After two weeks of engaging in stages two and three, the co-researchers returned and shared the data we generated in the previous phases. We considered our original questions, propositions and action plan in the light of that experience and we modified our research procedures.

The fourth stage marked a return to propositional knowing, and completed the first full cycle from reflection to action to reflection. As mentioned previously, we held seven meetings in total, over a period of five months, which completed six cycles of inquiry.

2.2 Reflecting on the data

The four stages of action and reflection described above allowed us to follow the method systematically. However, unlike other approaches to research, much of the research design and procedure were emergent and determined at each reflection stage collaboratively by the group. As such, "analysis of the data" will be discussed in detail in the "Outcomes" part of the thesis. As a starting point, our inquiry relied primarily on verbal reports of the participants' experience, but also embraced other expressive forms, namely, drawings.

2.3 Validity

Co-operative inquiry is consistent with my assumptions and values and this allowed me to follow the method systematically. It also allowed all co-researchers to evaluate the method and reflect on the generated data as the research progressed. The approach felt natural in every cycle of data generation and reflection: both practical skills and theoretical propositions that arose from the inquiry derived from our shared experience. Co-operative inquiry claims to be a valid approach to research exactly because it rests on critical subjectivity, "*a collaborative encounter with experience*" (Reason & Rowan, 1991), and as such it involves a self-reflexive attention to the many versions of reality that people hold.

Thus, our inquiry was open to various ways in which the co-researchers, as humans, could deceive ourselves, namely, our inquiry was particularly threatened by consensus collusion and unaware projections. Therefore, a set of procedures described by Heron (1996) was applied to engage with and explore such defensive tendencies and to review the quality of the work. The first of these is *research cycling*. Reason (1998) argues that research cycling leads toward critical subjectivity and enhances the inquirers' claims to

articulate a subjective-objective reality. So, cycling and re-cycling between action and reflection gave us the opportunity to examine issues in different ways, several times, and from different perspectives.

In addition, although as the initiator I initially planned the *balance between reflection and action*, it was subsequently and constantly evaluated collectively in response to what was happening and what we felt was needed. This procedure was enhanced by balancing *convergence and divergence* within and between cycles: on a number of occasions we diverged over different parts of the research questions and on the methodologies we used to explore these, which enabled us to articulate the research topic more thoroughly. We also balanced convergence and divergence of the *reflection aspects* of the inquiry. We did so by using both artistic and verbal ways of making sense of our experience, and naturally diverged on our propositions using either intellectual and/or experiential skills.

The problem of *uncritical subjectivity* was also raised regularly throughout the inquiry, and our assumptions and beliefs that had the potential to distort the inquiry process were duly challenged. Although we attempted to adopt the *devil's advocate*[4] procedure formally, this proved unnecessary since the challenging happened naturally and was founded on the group dynamics.

The interplay of *chaos and order* was an aspect of the inquiry that proved to be of particular significance. The process of achieving *authentic collaboration* through my unwillingness to guide and lead the group initiated *chaos*, confusion and conflict, which

[4] "A simple procedure that authorises any inquirer at any time to adopt formally the role of devil's advocate in order to question the group as to whether one of several forms of uncritical subjectivity is afoot." (Heron, 1996, p.60). These forms include: not noticing aspects of experience, unaware fixation on false assumptions, lack of rigour in inquiry method, etc.

in turn gave rise to *order* by using participative decision-making on the various aspects of the inquiry, from our propositions and findings, to methodological and practical considerations. In addition, we regularly explored the authenticity and motivation of our participation within the group.

In addition to the strategies built in the co-operative methodology, the present study attempts to incorporate the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for evaluating the quality of qualitative research. This is achieved by reflecting on the context of the research and placing the co-inquirers' own words in primary position within the outcomes. As a result, readers have the opportunity to assess how closely our experiences resonate with their own. In addition, triangulation was carried out through sending the "Process and Outcomes" section of the report to all co-inquirers. One written and four verbal sets of agreement and feedback were received and these are incorporated in the report.

These procedures made it possible to see more clearly the perspective from which our knowing was derived, rather than making it true in absolute terms. They also grounded our findings on our experience, allowed for communicating our outcomes to others, and made the present report possible.

2.4 Ethical considerations

According to Rowan (2000), ethical codes are based on the positivist paradigm: the researchers are in charge, keeping their distance, using participants for their convenience. Ethics is defined as "not harming", and potential harm can be corrected by debriefing. So, it aims at making *no* difference to those that take part. This is not so for

co-operative inquiry, which acknowledges that the actions taken have the potential to change participants/researchers and their environment.

Ethical issues run right through co-operative inquiry, since it is a democratic and egalitarian process, and does not alienate participants. It treats the other as fully human, as one would treat oneself. It is research *with* rather than *on* people, and as such it requires radical changes to the ethical codes (Rowan, 2000).

In addition, the ethical concerns are not just about the individuals involved, but also about the whole community, as each cycle is a dialectical engagement with the world. So, as researchers, we had to be careful throughout about the potential side effects of our actions. As Mertens (1998) points out, we had to be aware and constantly reflect on our basic beliefs, view of the world, and how these influence our approach to research.

Ethical approval was sought and given by the University of Wolverhampton in November 2008 (App. 7). Some recommendations were made regarding boundary conditions (App. 8): examining our life and experience had the potential of uncovering things that could be uncomfortable. This was discussed within the group, and we agreed that each member had responsibility to flag when a particular topic was causing distress. It was the initiator's responsibility to identify appropriate services for therapeutic support.

The inquiry involved adult participants who were not considered to be vulnerable and informed consent (App. 5) was obtained prior to the start of the research in accordance with the BPS Guidelines (2004). Further, all co-researchers negotiated and decided together on *all* aspects of the inquiry.

Confidentiality issues were also a matter for discussion within the group and individuals were encouraged to determine the decisions. As a starting point, the initiator suggested that all information was to be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). It was agreed that the information would be held for a maximum of five years from the completion of the study, after which time records are to be destroyed. Six out of the eight participants decided to be anonymous.

Discussions also took place to clarify boundaries regarding ownership. Participants were given the option of collaborating in the writing of the final report but declined. All co-researchers were also given the opportunity to write their own report based on the group experience, stating clearly whether other people have seen and approved the text (Reason & Heron, 2008).

Finally, since participation was voluntary, participants were free to withdraw at any time and one participant dropped out after the fourth meeting. Consent was obtained at the end of each meeting as suggested by the University of Wolverhampton's Ethics Committee (App. 6).

2.5 Conclusion

Co-operative inquiry is by no means an easy process. It asks from the researcher more than any form of traditional research. But it also gives more.

As Torbert (1989) argues it is only when we have grown to a certain level of awareness and self understanding that we can take the necessary risks. It is this level of awareness

that allowed us to get into this process of active learning, changing ourselves and our environment, and coming out different.

Chapter 3: Inquiry Process and Outcomes

This chapter follows the inquiry chronologically, and is organised in terms of the emerging outcomes and the transformative process.

3.1 First Stage (First reflection phase)

3.1.2 Introduction

Upon reviewing the literature on dreaming, two major themes became evident: that research is limited and primarily refers to neurobiological features, and that dreams are deeply personal and meaningful. Therefore, I chose a qualitative method to explore the subjective nature of dreaming. I believe that, amongst qualitative methods, co-operative inquiry is best positioned to creatively address questions and to initiate knowledge and insights for all those involved.

According to Reason, developments "*in co-operative inquiry have been closely linked with experiential learning and humanistic psychology*" (1994, p. 2). Both these are an integral part of Counselling Psychology theory and practice, which emphasise personal growth, mutual respect, and the development of autonomy and personal responsibility.

I view relationships between people as fundamental to the creation of our reality: a methodology that separates the researcher from the participant denies that relationship with the potential to invalidate the knowledge created. Thus, unless people participate in the construction of knowledge, that knowledge has no meaning for them (Reason & Heron, 1995). This is a question of power and politics in both the research and the therapy context. By engaging in a co-operative inquiry, the power to establish meaning was a shared process and not imposed by myself, the "expert" researcher. As such, co-

operative inquiry is most congruent both with my research requirements and my personal and professional self.

By collaboratively inquiring into dreaming, we attempted to break down the paradigm of separate researcher and subject roles: co-operative research is research *with* people rather than *on* or *about* people. The division was replaced by a participative relationship among all those involved. So, in order to explore dreams, as co-inquirers we engaged in both roles, moving in cyclic fashion between phases of reflection as co-researchers and phases of action as co-participants. Our inquiry was concerned both with acquiring knowledge on dreams, and with transforming ourselves through the practice of dreaming and our interactions with each other. Each cycle was used to refine and deepen the other and the inquiry outcomes involved four interdependent types of knowledge:

1. Propositional knowing: Our initial propositions that were based on our past experiences and intellect, and informed the questions we posed and our chosen methodology for exploring them.

2. Practical knowing, which involved applying our chosen methodology in our world, sometimes together and sometimes separately.

3. Experiential knowing: The feedback we got in real time about our interaction with the world of dreaming, and

4. Presentational knowing, the ways with which we attempted to represent that experience, and which in turn fed into a revised propositional understanding of our original questions.

Specifically, the action phases of the inquiry involved practical and experiential knowing. It would not do the method justice to assume that these phases are similar to the data generation and collection of quantitative and "mainline" qualitative research. Rather, our interaction with the world of dreams was a dynamic process that transformed both us, as participants/researchers, and our dream world.

Similarly, the reflection phases of the inquiry involved primarily propositional and presentational knowing. To draw a parallel with the "data analysis" of "mainline" research would be arbitrary: the data did not lie in a ready-made form, but it was actively shaped by the interaction between co-researchers. Thus, *making sense of the data* was at the heart of the inquiry, and to that effect we adopted Heron's (1996) approach in reporting, collating and reviewing the data as outlined below.

The *first step* in every reflection stage involved us sharing with each other the data we generated individually in the preceding action phase. This was achieved by individually reporting our experiential findings in turn, with supporting verbal summary records based on our dream diaries and active memory in the early stages, and representational records (drawings) in the later stages. Thus, the primary way of generating data and making sense of it was founded on memory, on how each co-inquirer perceived, paid careful attention and remembered their experiences. It therefore involved an intentional directing of awareness in line with the relativist ontology inherent in the methodology: the perceiver and the perceived are inseparable and together they create a subjective-objective reality.

The *second step* involved us together collating our individual findings and looking for meaningful patterns of relationship among them. This was primarily achieved by

identifying similarities and differences among them. In order to illuminate aspects of dreaming, we looked into how these diverse personal accounts did or did not overlap, acknowledging some differences as being complementary, and others as contradictory. Agreement on overlap was not an agreement on what was objective, rather we created a participatory reality with such conditions as where necessary for further exploration and transformation to take place.

We achieved these conditions of collaboration by developing to some extent a number of skills throughout the inquiry process. These skills engaged our subjectivity with the experiential focus of the inquiry and at the same time enabled it to become more open and critical. They included being present, open and empathic, being able to bracket and reframe our assumptions and beliefs, and being able to articulate our values. Practicing the cyclic process of the inquiry was a means to acquire these skills, albeit in an irregular, fragmented and clumsy way.

So, during the action phases and the first step of the reflection phases, we were individually and progressively identifying significant patterns within our personal experience. In the second step of the reflection phase we were seeking agreement about what was significant. These "significant" aspects depended largely on our individual and group intuition, on where we stood during each stage in relation to the informative and transformative aspects and to each other, and on the extent to which the conditions for authentic collaboration were met on each reflection phase.

Making further sense of the data in this way, led on occasion to us modifying and extending our original accounts and reviewing our propositions. For the most part, this

reframing was messy, unfocused and not formalised, and it was sometimes left implicit in our minds during the sharing of experiences.

As in most co-operative inquiries, the primary outcome and simultaneously the evidence, is our transformed self. The present report on the process and findings has an important, yet secondary, status in the overall inquiry. It attempts to embrace all aspects of the inquiry and to creatively revise our participatory reality in a written format.

Thus, the writing itself comprises the *third step* of making sense of the data. It involved listening to the audio files and reading the transcripts a number of times in order to become familiar with the participants' accounts and the overall "feel" of our meetings. Notes were made on the group's collation of individual findings and the agreement on patterns, on whether accounts did or did not overlap, on the group dynamics and on my own emotional reactions listening back.

So, this third step involved further collating and revising our outcomes. Since this process largely depends on the author's idiosyncratic standpoint, it does not claim to be the only way of communicating what proved to be an adventurous journey. The present report forms part of presentational knowing: it is a personal account of the inquiry, the group's journey through the initiator's eyes.

3.1.3 Co-inquirers

Table 3.1 presents the members of the Inquiry, our ages and background at the time of the inquiry, how we are represented in the audio transcripts, and our attendance in meetings. All names are pseudonyms apart from my own (Lina) and Phil's, in

accordance to individual preferences on confidentiality issues and as discussed in our second meeting.

Name	Age	Background	Name and Colour in Transcript	Attendance in meetings
Lina	34	Counselling Psychology trainee	Person 1, Pink	Attended all meetings
Kenneth	28	Counselling Psychology trainee	Person 2, Green	Apologies meeting 4
Samuel	28	Counselling Psychology trainee	Person 3, Blue	Attended all meetings
Peter	52	Counselling Psychology trainee	Person 4, Red	Apologies meeting 6
Damon	36	Martial arts and yoga instructor	Person 5, Yellow	Not present meeting 7
Lola	26	Art therapy trainee, working with children	Person 6, Orange	Apologies meeting 1 & 4, not present meeting 7
Betty	30	Training in Positive Psychology, working in mental health promotion	Person 7, Purple	Apologies meetings 3 & 7
Phil	27	Working in retail	Person 8, Brown	Discontinued after meeting 3
All			Person 9, Turquoise	

Table 3.1*: Co-Inquirers, representation on audio transcripts, and meeting attendance*

3.1.4 A typical meeting

In order to give a flavour of our meetings, a brief account of the sort of activities we engaged in in a typical meeting follows:

- Sharing experience of action phase
- Looking for similarities and differences between personal accounts
- Discussing validity

- Discussing original propositions in light of the shared experience
- Discussing derived propositions and new strategies of exploration for the next cycle of action
- Discussing interpersonal tensions and differences, without focusing specifically on emotional distress
- Sharing food and humour

Co-inquirers initially agreed that the meetings were not to be strictly structured and no set agenda was necessarily followed. Rather, we were open to questions, propositions, observations and contributions from all group members and so it was the group that instinctively set the agenda.

3.2 Introductory Workshop

The first stage of the project enabled people who exhibited an interest on the research to make an informed decision on whether to join or not. Therefore, I started sharing information verbally and by email on both the topic of dreaming and the nature of the methodology with interested persons in advance of the introductory workshop. Potential members received the information sheet (App. 5), as well as the literature review and research proposal upon request. I felt that it was important in order to stay true to the egalitarian nature of the methodology, to share as much information on the background of the research and my personal stance as possible. This contributed early in redressing the power between group members and myself, the initiator, in socializing potential group members to the methodology, and in setting the foundations for authentic collaboration.

While everyone knew at least one other person in the group, we all made it a priority to facilitate the development of this new group and to enable people to fully appreciate the equality inherent in the method.

As expected, during the initial meeting it became evident that everyone came with different expectations, fears, and ideas about research. Therefore, ways in which the group might proceed were suggested, and the ideas behind cooperative inquiry were explained as follows:

- Logic of method and cycles of action and reflection
- Emphasis on the personal involvement and its demands
- Emphasis on the importance of shared power and responsibility
- How questions and inquiry methods were to be decided collectively
- Validity procedures

I consciously decided not to start with a given model of dreams, or even a rough area of interest within the world of dreaming, in order for the inquiry to be as open as possible and to allow the group to develop its own theories and propositions.

3.2.1 The group comes together

The life of the group started with hope and enthusiasm and, as people joined in, the energy was high. This was a good starting point in our endeavour to see if there was common ground for working together. There was a downturn as some of the different attitudes and approaches within the group started to become apparent, and would in later meetings become more evident.

I was aware from previous discussions that some group members were anxious about their ability to *remember* their dreams, and so I chose to initiate the discussion by distributing a handout with some tips to support individuals in their endeavour (App. 9). To my surprise and delight, the group agreed that simply being aware of the inquiry topic in advance had the effect of bringing dreams to the forefront of our conscious awareness, and the simple act of intending to remember our dreams positively impacted on both the quality and quantity as shown in Figure 3.1. This in turn suggested that the transformational stage of the inquiry had already started when individuals were contemplating taking part in the research.

Co-inquirers also suggested that dream recollection tends to be better when sleep is interrupted, for example when hitting the snooze several times when the alarm goes off, and that dreams are more lively when one is at the "transitional point", or "crossover" between waking up or falling asleep (see for example Damon, 00:06:53.55; Lina, 00:09:02.22). Damon argued that meditative techniques can train us to be observers of our thinking minds while at the "crossover" point, and can so facilitate dream recollection and awareness within dreams (Damon, 00:04:50.17).

Further, Kenneth stated that, when he found himself in the transitional point, he was able to direct his attention in a way that was influencing his dream: he was able to go back in the dream he was having, and pick it up from the point he had left it:

"*But then the weirdest bit is that when I start to wake up, and I think, actually that* [dream] *was very cool, I want to finish that and then go back! And resume!*" (Kenneth, 00:26:45.55).

"*…resume where you left off and go back to the scene that was the influence by the game, and go back to wherever you've been doing then*" (Kenneth, 00:26:47.42).

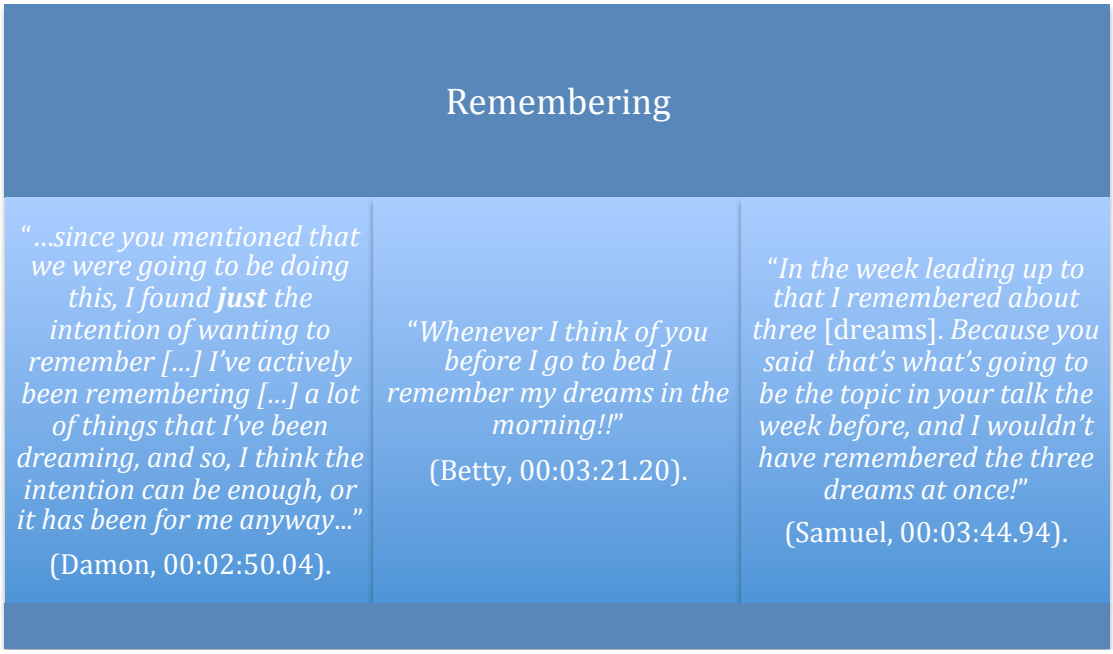


Figure 3.1: *Dream recall and personal transformation occurring at the reflection stage of the inquiry.*

We used the proposition "*Are dreams important?*" as a starting point in our endeavour to see if there was common ground for working together. Some of us gave to dreams as much importance as we did to incidents in waking life, accepting them rather than trying to interpret them. The group agreed that dreams are of good entertainment value, equal perhaps to watching a film or playing a video game (Figure 3.2). And in fact, members of the group ascertained that when playing video games in "real life", sleep tends to be of poor quality, with dreams being more vivid and taking place in the setting of the game (Kenneth, 00:26:44.95; Betty, 00:28:10.14), while the boundaries between reality and dreaming may be blurred:

"*I'm like being **in** the game, playing it, a lot more than I would remember stuff about reality…*" (Betty, 00:28:28.50).

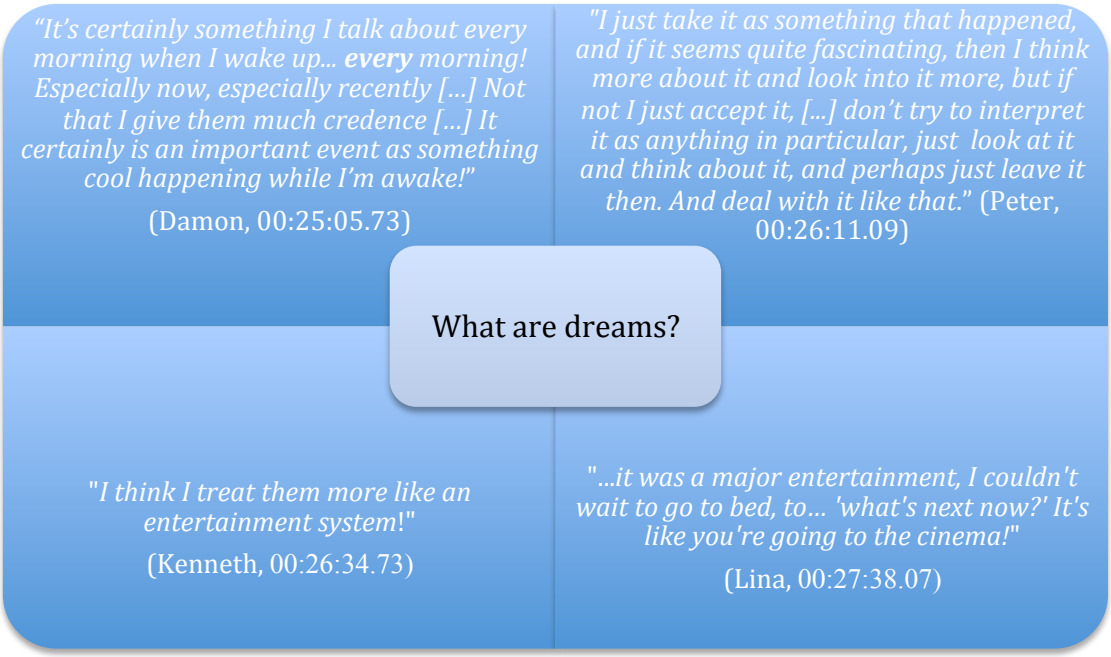


Figure 3.2: *Dreams as important as events of waking life and of entertainment value*

Figure 3.3 illustrates some of the dreams that co-inquirers discussed about in this first meeting.

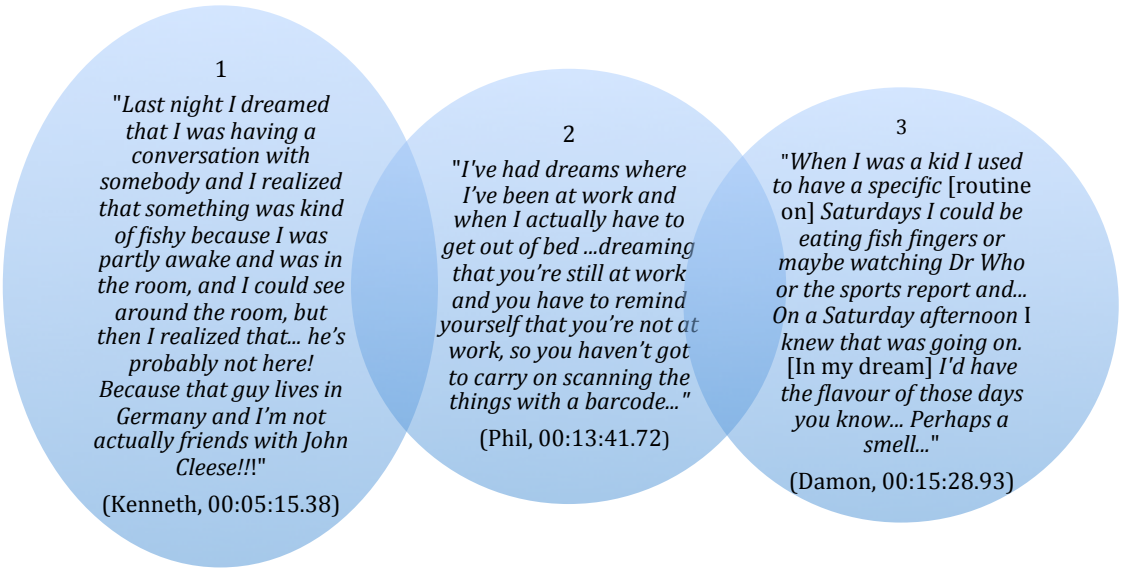


Figure 3.3 *Some dreams*

3.2.2 Propositions, research question and methodology

The conversation was vivid and members were involved in varying degrees. A number of questions and propositions that co-researchers were interested to investigate arose. These are shown in Table 3.2, while some indicative corresponding accounts can be found in Appendix 10.

How does waking life affect dreams, or, how are moods affected by dreams?	How dreams and reality blur	The fine differences between a conscious and a dreaming state (believing you're awake when you're not)	Meditation and mindfulness in relation to awareness in dreaming and waking life
Transitional point or "crossover" from waking to sleeping state	"Bizarre" dreams that somehow seem "normal" until the light of day	Dreams being more vivid while waking up or falling asleep	Similarities and differences between daydreams and dreams
Dreaming of past everyday events	Timelessness of dreams	Premonitions	Relationship between "déjà vu" experiences and dreaming
Repeated themes in dreams / therapeutic aspects	Dream interpretation/ therapeutic aspects	Environmental/waking factors affecting dreams	Inducing dreams
Lucid dreaming- becoming aware within the dream that we are dreaming	Day residue	Questioning within the dream whether we are dreaming- Pre-lucid dream state?	Picking dreams from where we left them

Table 3.2: *Questions and propositions*

These propositions were not stand alone questions, rather they were interconnected and closely related, roughly mapping our interests, ideas, experiences and beliefs on dreaming. So, to make our task easier, we decided to begin our journey by just observing

and taking notice of themes unfolding as we were getting more and more involved in the process. This overarching goal defined and shaped the whole of the inquiry.

Our task for the first action phase was to make a conscious decision to start remembering our dreams, a process that had already begun. To facilitate this, we decided to either keep a notepad or voice recorder by our pillow that would serve as a physical cue and a reminder of our intention. For those of us who were sharing a room with someone, a simple question of "*What did you dream about*?" and discussing our dreams or recording them upon waking and before getting out of bed, or even before opening our eyes, were used.

We hoped that by recording and remembering our dreams, we would be able to see whether our dreams reflected our waking life, or even if our waking life was affected by dreams. We so decided to also take notice of what was happening in our everyday lives, our moods, emotions, daily occurrences and environmental factors before and after we went to sleep.

3.2.3 Resistance, Divide and Bridging

Right from the start, various degrees of commitment manifested within the group. Some members of the group anticipated having difficulties with this first task, not least because incorporating dreams into our daily routine required time and transforming ourselves:

"*It is going to be difficult at first… especially if it's not something you normally try to fit into your life*" (Betty, 00:47:20.37).

Resistance and differing opinions were to take form in subsequent meetings, with the areas of precognitive and lucid dreams being the apple of discord[5] as early as the introductory meeting.

Specifically, Samuel acknowledging that he was "sceptical", while Kenneth thought that premonitions are an "interesting idea", proposing that they can be explained as "*misremembering a dream to make it fit to what's happened now*" (Kenneth, 00:19:43.52).

Damon attempted to bridge the divide that was starting to develop:
"I mean, with us also looking at the word «premonition» from just one point of view, isn't it? And that's in a kind of... that's a psychic way of looking at premonition, and surely premonition can be a logical presupposition of events!" (Damon, 00:19:52.05).

I was also conscious of the tensions that were starting to develop and as the initiator I felt that I was responsible for creating a validating environment, where no point of view would be excluded:

"*See, with dreams, I don't exclude anything, I think that everything plays a part. The premonitions may be the chicken or the egg, and I think it's both things. What you're thinking is coming true, what's coming true also affects your thinking, and so, I don't think there is a contradiction in believing both things actually!*" (Lina, 00:21:17.73)

[5] *Apple of Discord* (classical Greek mythology): a golden apple thrown into a banquet of the gods by Eris (goddess of discord- who had not been invited); the apple had 'for the fairest' written on it and Hera, Athena and Aphrodite all claimed it; when Paris (Prince of Troy) awarded it to Aphrodite it began a chain of events that led to the Trojan War. ~Something attractive that causes envy and quarrels among people who think they deserve it. (TheFreeDictionary.com)

3.2.4 Considerations on methodology and practicalities

By the end of our first meeting the inquiry had taken the form of an *outside closed boundary inquiry* in which as individual members we took action in our own dream lives (and did not attempt to interact or generate data involving others) and only came together to reflect on our experience, to share data, make sense of it, revise our thinking and plan the next action phase. This was challenged and revised in subsequent meetings, and on occasion we decided to look at what went on within the inquiry group (*inside inquiry*, as described by Heron, 1996).

I initially planned the inquiry along *Apollonian*[6] lines, rationally following sequenced steps with each reflection phase used to reflect on the data from the last action phase and to apply this thinking into the next action phase in a cyclic fashion (Heron, 1996). However, the meetings were not systematically structured or controlled, and there was no set agenda. Rather, they were open to questions, propositions, observations and contributions to all group members and so it was the group that intuitively set the agenda. This allowed for a more imaginative and expressive interplay between making sense and taking action, which in turn took the group into the less travelled and unfamiliar waters of the *Dionysian* inquiry.

The tensions between these two forms of inquiry manifested as early as the introductory workshop with Betty initiating a conversation about the research process:

"I think it's very different being in a group where there isn't an agenda […] *Because usually you come to a group and somebody is leading the group, and it's like: 'We're*

[6] The *Apollonian and Dionysian* is a philosophical dichotomy based on Greek mythology and famously linked to Nietzsche's "The Birth of Tragedy". Our existential being is determined by the constant interplay and the dialectic between the two: the *Apollonian* celebrates individuality, human reason and logical thinking, while the *Dionysian* is based on chaotic forces and celebrates emotions and instincts.

*going to tell **you** what you're going do'"* (Betty, 00:57:56.94).

Betty's observation was met with varying degrees of approval and disapproval within the group and a discussion on how we wanted to structure subsequent reflection meetings ensued. The agreement in this initial meeting was for the group to dynamically set their own agenda as the process unfolded so as to not interfere with the egalitarian nature of the methodology. However, with hindsight, it may well have been that individual members preferred more of a guidance and a co-ordinated process, another manifestation of the developing gap within the group.

Our inquiry moved several times around the cycle from reflection to action and back again, and so it was important at this first meeting to choose an appropriate amount of time for each part of the cycle and an appropriate rhythm of action and reflection. We also tried to accommodate every member's preferences and take into account external obligations of group members. We felt it was important for everyone to participate as fully as possible, and so we agreed to hold reflection meetings on weekends, roughly two to three weeks apart, at a time and place that we collectively agreed on.

There were discussions about having an online group in order to communicate, share experiences and knowledge, but this idea was rejected on confidentiality grounds. Instead, we decided to exchange email addresses and the initiator was tasked with communicating the dates and venues of the meetings.

The group acknowledged that the inquiry process had the potential to bring up unresolved issues and suggested allowing space for supporting each other. At this point I had to bring the group's attention to university requirements on ethics and the limitations

of our inquiry. We therefore agreed to be sensitive and responsible for each other's and our own well-being.

By the end of the first meeting all members chose to take part in the inquiry and signed the informed consent form. Damon summarised the feelings and hopes that permeated this first meeting:

"*I came completely open minded even though I find dreaming a big part of my life. I still wasn't expecting any kind of consensus at all. Because we're all so varied. […] If there are repeating themes in our personal lives that get reflected in our dreams and we might find… even closure or some kind of benefit from getting this stuff out! We might find ways to help each other out in certain ways. It could be interesting really."* (00:58:38.56).

3.3 Second stage (Second reflection phase)

3.3.1 Feedback from action phase and Findings

We started our second meeting by summarising the introductory workshop, revisiting our initial propositions and our chosen method. We proceeded with discussing our experiences of the action phase, and it became evident that members of the group were engaged in the process in varying degrees and were exploring the questions in their own different ways, something that continued for the duration of the inquiry. All members were present in this second meeting. The very interesting dream experiences of individual members from the first action phase are presented in Figures 3.5 to 3.11.

The group agreed that intending to *remember* and paying attention to our dreams and recording them shortly after waking (whether on a piece of paper, dictating or typing on

a phone, discussing them with someone) had a positive effect on our overall recollection:

"*…what I noticed more is that, before when I was saying that I didn't dream I just hadn't paid any attention to my dreams, cause I noticed that by scribbling down on a piece of paper close to my bed… there is often a couple of seconds and then you're sort of awake and you find whatever it was that you were doing. So, I had a lot of these kinds of dreams where you're sorting out your diary in your head, that kind of thing*. […] *The main thing I noticed is how quickly you just totally, totally forget. Like if you get up and do anything, you wouldn't really remember*." (Samuel, 00:13:23.29)

"*I did make a conscious effort to think to myself, I need to remember my dreams in the morning. And, to be fair, I did start to remember a lot more than I would usually.*" (Betty, 00:16:28.37)

Further, certain triggers during the day, going back to bed, and the process of recording itself triggered recollection of more dreams:

"*As I start talking more, a bit more details come out. But I keep noticing themes…*" (Kenneth, 00:35:50.45).

Most of us were able to identify strong links between the content of our dreams and the context of our daily life, sometimes in the form of the day's happenings, a film we may have been watching, a computer game, or life and work stresses. In addition, fantasies, moods and our last thoughts before falling asleep also made an appearance in our dreams:

"*I was going through some very stressful stuff.* […] *I was trying to solve problems, so this came into my dreams. I can go to bed and think, ok, I need to call this person and I need to do this thing, and then that would evolve into a dream. They were very stressful dreams*. […] *So, yes, for me, there is a strong link between what's happening in my life and what I would dream. And vice versa, like I would wake up after dreaming all these lovely dreams… in a better mood*." (Lina, 00:11:00.03)

So, not only waking life was influencing our dreams, but moods and music tunes in our dreams also had the power to linger on for a few minutes or hours after waking:

"*I sometimes wake up with tunes in my head and sometimes they are there all day. And sometimes it's like: "Why is this in my head?" Because it's always something really cheesy. But then I can get about my day, and then… walking home again and it's just the same song, the music.*" (Peter, 00:00:57.46)

We also drew a distinction between dreams that were "trivial" and referred to everyday events, and "strange" dreams where there was not an obvious link with current life events:

"*I had a lot of these kind of dreams where you're sorting out your diary in your head, that kind of thing. Where you've got your day and the events in your day seem to play through. I had a couple of stranger dreams as well… which didn't make an awful lot of sense.*" (Samuel, 00:13:23.29).

The apparent bizarreness of some dreams, which did not lend themselves to a "cause and effect" logic, had the potential to create anxieties, and Samuel in particular was hesitant to report dreams that he considered "strange":

"*By strange I mean when […] it doesn't make sense why you were thinking about that, or the events or people… You didn't really wake up and go: "Yeah, I see, I know why I probably dreamed about that!" But it just seems like something historical from a long time ago, or… That's why I said "strange." And this just makes me sound crazy*!" (Samuel, 00:15:37.73).

On occasion, we viewed dreams as having a therapeutic effect on life's stresses:

"*I suppose it was my subconscious or something within me… I found an escape route through. And I had a lot of fantasies, and I carried these fantasies in my dreams too* […] *they made my life easier and things a bit more balanced, so, not everything was going downhill, I found this escape route…*" (Lina, 00:11:00.03).

Other times, persistent themes in dreams were linked with a problem in waking life, and occasionally a dream offered a resolution to a dilemma that was experienced in life:

"*…and instead of me choosing one or the other I decided I would manipulate everybody else, and the bad guys and all that, to get* ***my*** *way out of this dilemma. So, as to not have to make the choice […] but the choice to be something that* ***I*** *wanted, something better*" (Kenneth, 00:57:06.85).

In this initial phase of the inquiry repeated patterns, themes, and recurring dreams were indeed very common and created in the dreamer a sense of wonder and a need to "*work it out*" (Peter, 00:30:11.76), to figure out the message while still in the dream or shortly after waking.

Lola also viewed some of her dreams as carriers of messages, but not about past or current unresolved issues that seemed to be commonplace for the majority of us, but about events that had yet to happen:

"*I had a few dreams that I* ***did*** *take notice of, but they were a couple of weeks before the thing that actually happened, and they were trying to tell me something and I realised afterwards what they were telling me!*" (Lola, 00:58:52.06).

Lola had three dreams that she believed were harbingers of future events (Figure 3.4). Two of these dreams were "bizarre": they were a source of confusion at the time and had the power to change Lola's feelings and behaviour around the people they involved:

"[At the time of the dream] *I just felt really confused, but concerned… And I just asked her "Are you ok?"*" (Lola, 01:01:45.54). "[Afterwards] *You do feel guilty, or, you do feel like you have some kind of a responsibility to* ***do*** *something*." (Lola, 01:02:35.99, in relation to dream 2, Fig. 3.4).

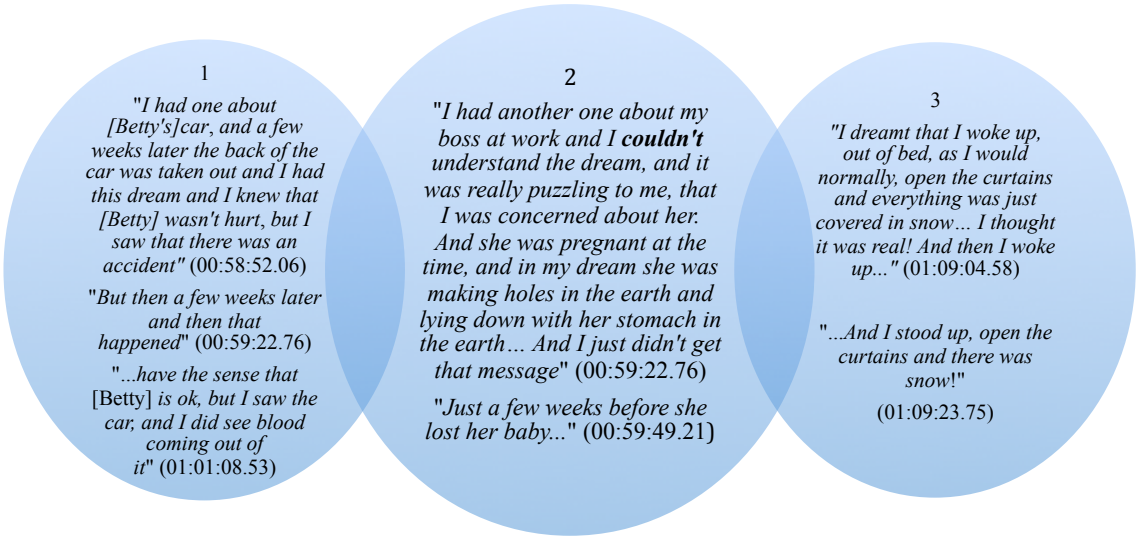


Figure 3.4 *Lola's precognitive dreams*

With hindsight Lola believed that the dreams were acting as metaphors, yet she felt responsible and distressed for not being able to "read" the message and stop the impending catastrophe:

"[I felt] *Awful! Especially because I told her, as well. When she came* [I told her]*: "Oh! I had a really bad dream about you. Has everything been alright?" And she said, 'yeah'. She was ok at the time but she was having a few problems, but… I felt bad because I couldn't do anything! I kind of saw this stuff happening in my dream…"* (Lola, 01:00:32.69, in relation to dream 2 in Fig 3.4).

Fig 3.5 *Damon's dream experiences*

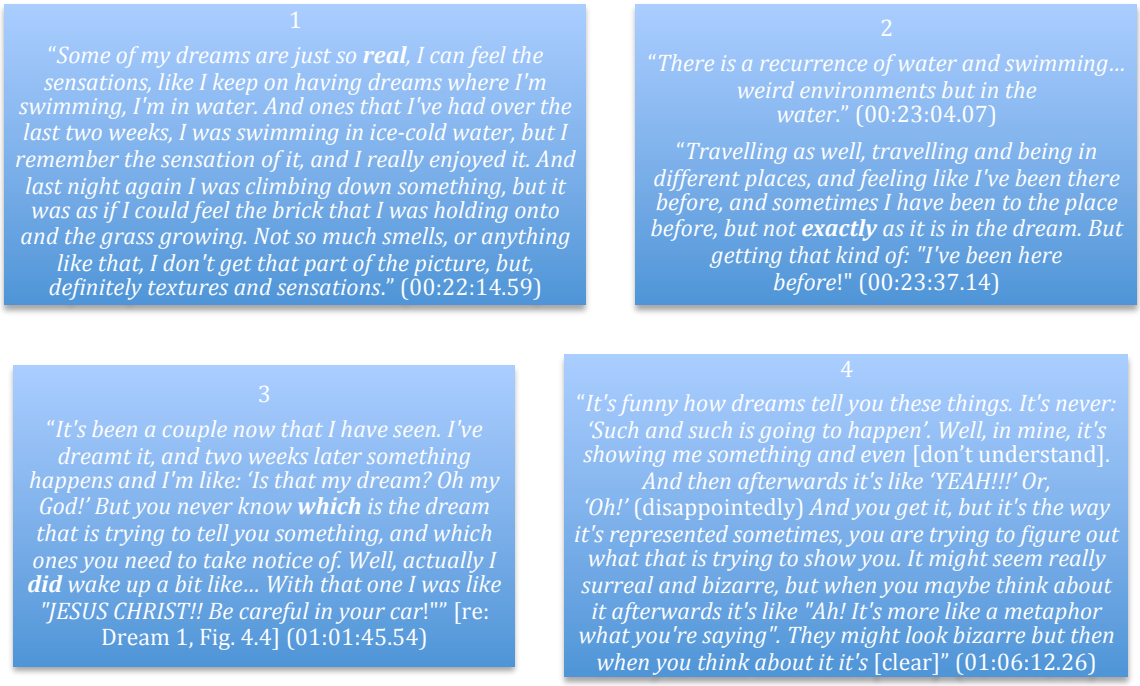


Figure 3.6 *Lola's Dream Experiences*

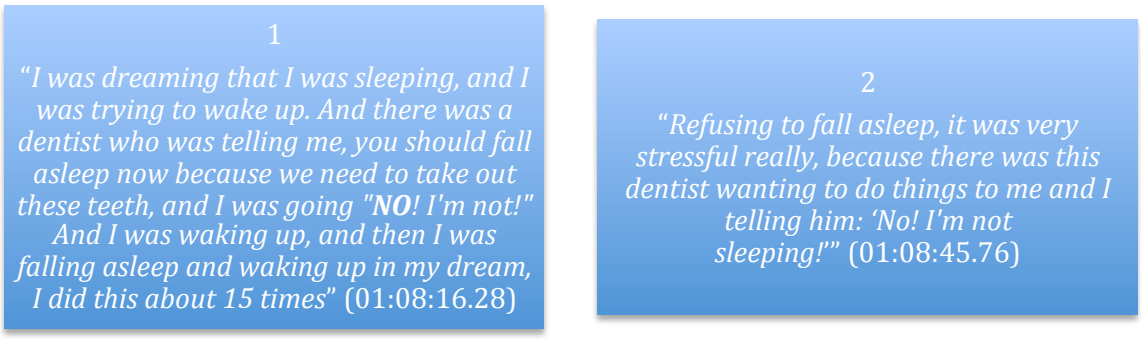


Figure 3.7 *Lina's dream experiences*

*"I've been in the police, and I left about 3 years ago, **but**, it's as if I'm back in the police again, but **not** anywhere I recognize, not in a building I recognize, none of the buildings that I used to work in. So, I still know that I'm doing it again, I'm working there again, doing what I used to do, but in a totally different surrounding, with different people. And some of these surroundings have re-occurred a couple of times it's been the same place, not knowing where it is. I just dream that I am in the Police again.*

One of the strange things that is, in the old days, quite a few years ago, we used to be able to sleep there. We used to have beds and things like that, but we don't now. And it used to be a thing about that, I've been in one of these buildings, it was a gothic building with lots of rooms, lots of space and things like that, where all these beds were for sleeping at night and you found your own one in this space that you felt comfortable in and you'd stay there.

*And for some reason **that** was a recurring theme for me. The beds and rooms all over the place, all through this building, or parts of it. And it gets quite gothic and **dark** at times, which is really strange. And if I was waking up around about that time when I've been doing this, it still had a nasty feel to it, a dark feel to it, and it took about 10 minutes before I've been awake. So it was quite strange"* (00:27:32.89)

Figure 3.8 *Peter's dream experiences*

1

"I was being chased by the army, and Daniel Craig was my friend but he didn't want to talk to me." (00:32:32.30)

*"So, I don't **know** I'm dreaming. Lots of my dreams are that I'm being chased by something, and it's always different. There's normally death involved in there somewhere."* (00:33:16.80)

2

*"Before we started this process, I went through a phase where I was having dreams of being chased, I've been chased by old head teachers, but they weren't **my** head teachers, they were like **a** head teacher. I can **jump**, but I can't jump far, I can only jump high... So, as long as I'm jumping high, they are waiting for me at the bottom and I'm trying to jump high again, but I'm not getting any further away.*

*They are like that normally, like in this one, the Daniel Craig one, we weren't **in** the army, we were chased **by** the army, and if he should touched somebody they'd die. And they crumble down to ash. And I've had that in another dream where I fell into a pit and I came out the other end, and everyone came out the other end of the pit. They turned to ash as well! Just died! So, I don't know... the first time I had that dream it was quite scary."* (00:34:05.02)

Figure 3.9 *Phil's dream experiences*

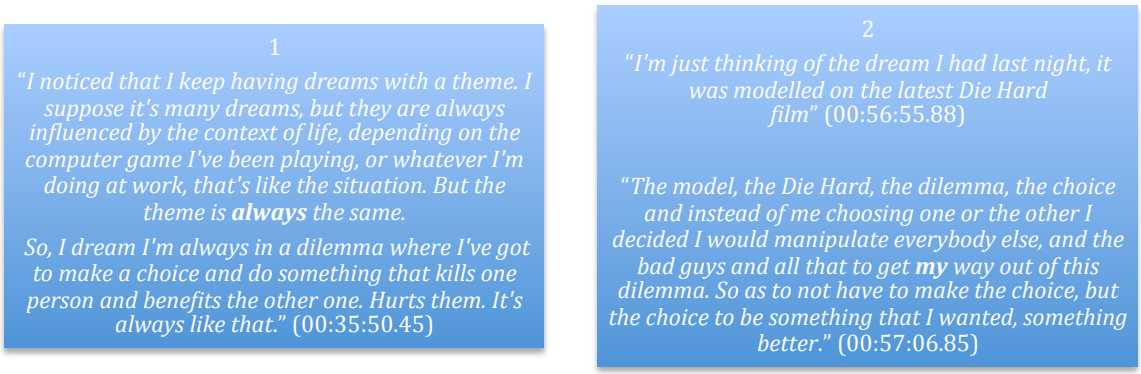


Figure 3.10 *Kenneth's dream experiences*

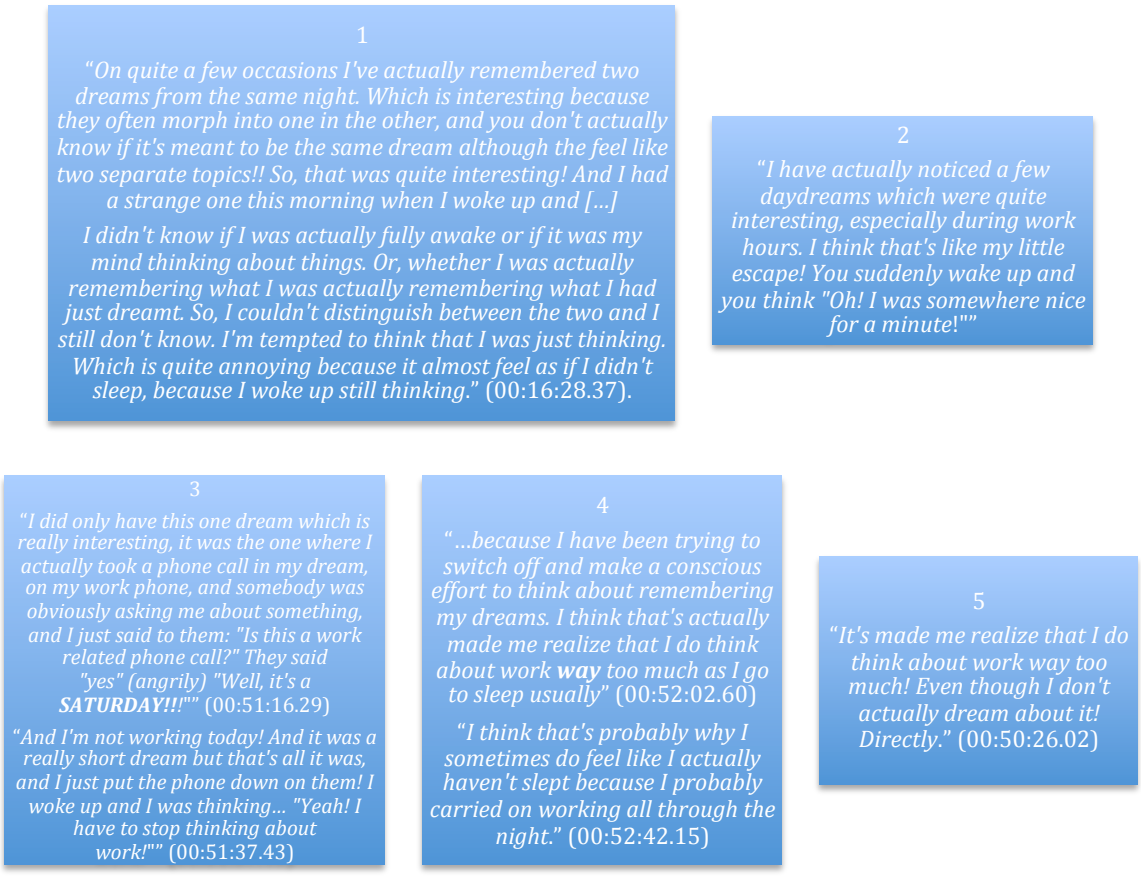


Figure 3.11 *Betty's dream experiences*

The Self and Time in our dreams

We agreed that "*there is always this awareness of yourself in a dream*" (Lina, 00:43:50.74), and that awareness of the self, the "I", was constant in all our dream experiences, whether trivial or bizarre, whether we were aware that we were dreaming or not, whether we were observers of a scene or part of the dream plot. Even in dreams where we assumed a different identity or form, this awareness of the "I" was a given:

"*I had dreams where, it was me but I was, say, a man. So, I wasn't quite me, I was being someone, but it wasn't me. It was like I was a different character in a way. I was still aware of myself, but I was aware that I wasn't that*…" (Lola, 00:42:33.09).

This awareness of "I" was stronger for Damon in particular who was conscious that he was dreaming within his dreams:

"*I'm always conscious during my dreams. So, I've been even more conscious recently. And in most of my dreams I've always been aware* [that] *they involve myself, most of the time looking through my own eyes.* […] *And, so, if things start to go a bit: 'Oh! I'm dreaming!' and then I can even stop it or just carry on and be entertained*" (00:24:06.82).

So, although the "I" was a constant in all our experiences, the feel and "quality" of the Self in dreams seemed to be different for each one of us and at different times. This "cyclic nature awareness" is illustrated in Figure 3.5.1 and was grounded on our dream experiences. I chose to present it in a cyclic form, because the alternative assumes a hierarchy that favours some experiences over others.

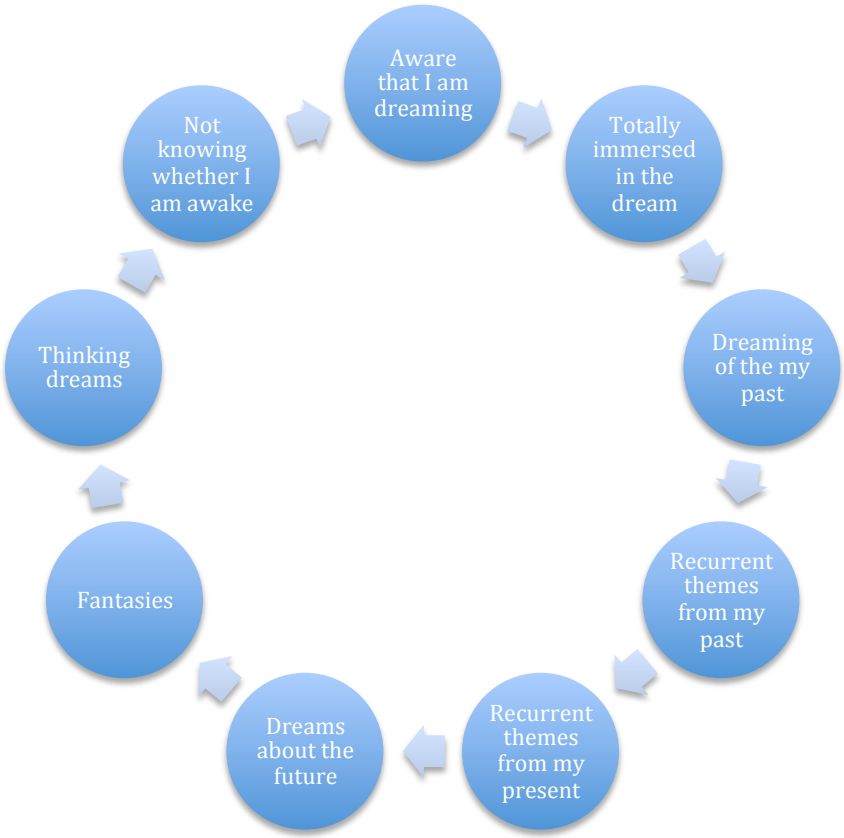


Figure 3.5.1 *Awareness through Time Continuum*

3.3.2 Divide and Bridging

Damon's affirmation of being lucid in his dreams and Lola's sharing of her pre-cognitive dreams acted as a catalyst for the differing views within the group to start emerging, with co-researchers divided into "sceptics" and "believers" for want of better terms. In particular, some of us argued that a dream that at first glance seemed to be predicting the future could *just* be a coincidence, or, as Kenneth argued referring to Lola's dream (dream 2, Figure 3.4) "*you might have noticed that she didn't look well!*" (Kenneth, 01:04:53.02). The tensions and conflict within the group seemed to remain hidden and unspoken for the most part, and there was an attempt to consolidate the two emerging differing views without excluding any experience:

"*…I think it's quite clear that we all perceive in slightly different ways as well, and we pick things up, and we have things that make us particularly good at our jobs maybe, or* […] *And to other people that can be, you know, an extra-sensory perception"* (Damon, 01:04:58.73).

3.3.3 Propositions and research question

The overall experience and the conscious effort to remember our dreams drew our attention to daily stressors and the fact that these seemed to continue throughout the night. Contemplating chores from the day before and sorting out our diaries just before falling asleep was a common practice for many of us and affected both the quality of our sleep and the content of our dreams. So, we acknowledged the need to change our routine and be able to "switch off" before going to bed, in order to have a respite from our waking lives and stress-free dreams. For Betty, this insight came in the form of a dream as shown in box 3, Figure 3.11.

We discussed the option of practising lucidity as a means to "improve" the content of our dreams but also as a way to explore recurrent dreams that were a mystery, but that proposition was met with some resistance. Although no objections were explicitly raised at this stage, the group instinctively acknowledged the limitations and temporarily dropped this proposition. Instead, our proposition for the second action phase was to see whether changing our sleep routine would affect both the quality of our sleep and the content of our dreams. In order to achieve this, we agreed to listen to the same piece of music every night, and Damon took responsibility of choosing and distributing the music, while taking into account certain factors agreed by the group (for example, no "loud" music or bagpipes).

3.3.4 Considerations on methodology and practicalities

Co-researchers discussed a number of methodological issues including confidentiality and the use of pseudonyms with the initiator and one more person deciding to keep their real names. There were certain anxieties around revealing our real identities "*I'd say the most outrageous things and they'll think...*!" (Kenneth, 00:05:33.06).

In addition, we discussed research supervision provided by the University and how the audio recordings would be transcribed. Kenneth volunteered to be the facilitator in the meeting that was to follow.

As in the first meeting so in this one, individual members of the group expressed the hope that as the inquiry was progressing and we were transforming through the process, we might be given the opportunity to induce common dreams and in this way share more of our experiences.

3.4 Third stage (Third reflection phase)

The action phase was not completed as planned in the second stage of the inquiry because of difficulties in distributing the music files. Rather, we continued working on remembering our dreams, looking for links with our waking life and taking notice of themes. This gave us the opportunity in this third phase of the inquiry to establish the validity of our findings, to revisit our aims and the purpose of the study, and to express anxieties regarding the methodology and the topic. We also touched upon our personal hopes, obstacles and fears regarding the process and the dynamics within the group.

3.4.1 Feedback from action phase and Findings

Going over our set of propositions from the first action phase, allowed us to replicate our initial findings, namely, that the intention to remember dreams and recording them soon after waking had a positive effect, and that there were links between our dream content and daily life. On occasion however experiences had shifted:

"*I don't remember what I have been dreaming this week* [...] *I'm either not **too** bothered about trying to remember, or a bit conscious of being conscious of trying to remember!*" (Damon 00:10:45.28).

Links between our dreams and occurrences in our waking life were evident in most of our accounts (see for example Peter's experiences in Box 1, Fig. 3.14, or Lola's in Box 2, Fig. 3.15). Recurrent themes also continued to be prevalent in our dreams. Phil was preoccupied with questions about death and he was perplexed by his dreams of "dead people", people close to him that have died in reality and appeared in his dreams dead (Figure 3.12, Box 1). Kenneth disclosed that his dream theme of "dilemmas" had somewhat changed from the previous stage, but that the central theme of trying to resolve a situation remained the same (Figure 3.13).

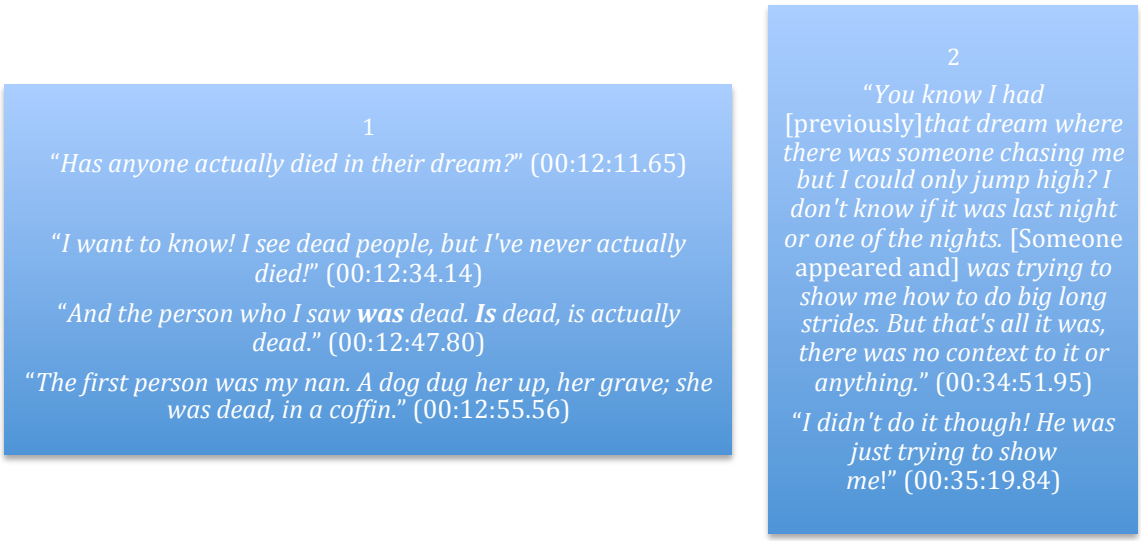


Figure 3.12 *Phil's dream experiences*

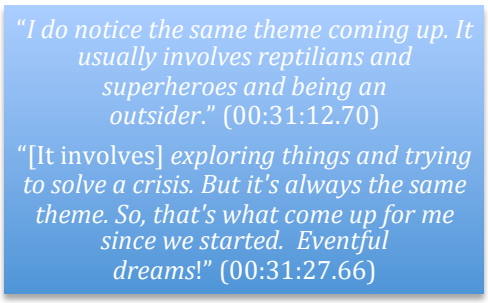


Figure 3.13 *Kenneth's dream experiences*

On the other hand, Peter stopped having the recurring "messy" dream he described in the previous phase of the inquiry (Figure 3.8), after he had a dream of "clearing out" (Box 2, Figure 3.14). Through reflection, Peter linked the recurrent theme to problems he had encountered with a project at work, and had now resolved. An insight on the meaning of the latest dream ensued:

"*Well, yeah, it could be! It could be a resolution!*" (Peter, 00:28:03.31).

A "resolution" also manifested in one of Phil's dreams: Whereas in past dreams he felt scared and unable to escape his persecutors because he could only jump high and not far (Box 2, Figure 3.9), the fear was beginning to resolve when a "mentor" appeared in his latest dream who was "*trying to show me how to do big long strides*" (Phil, 00:34:51.95). This dream is illustrated in box 2, Figure 3.12.

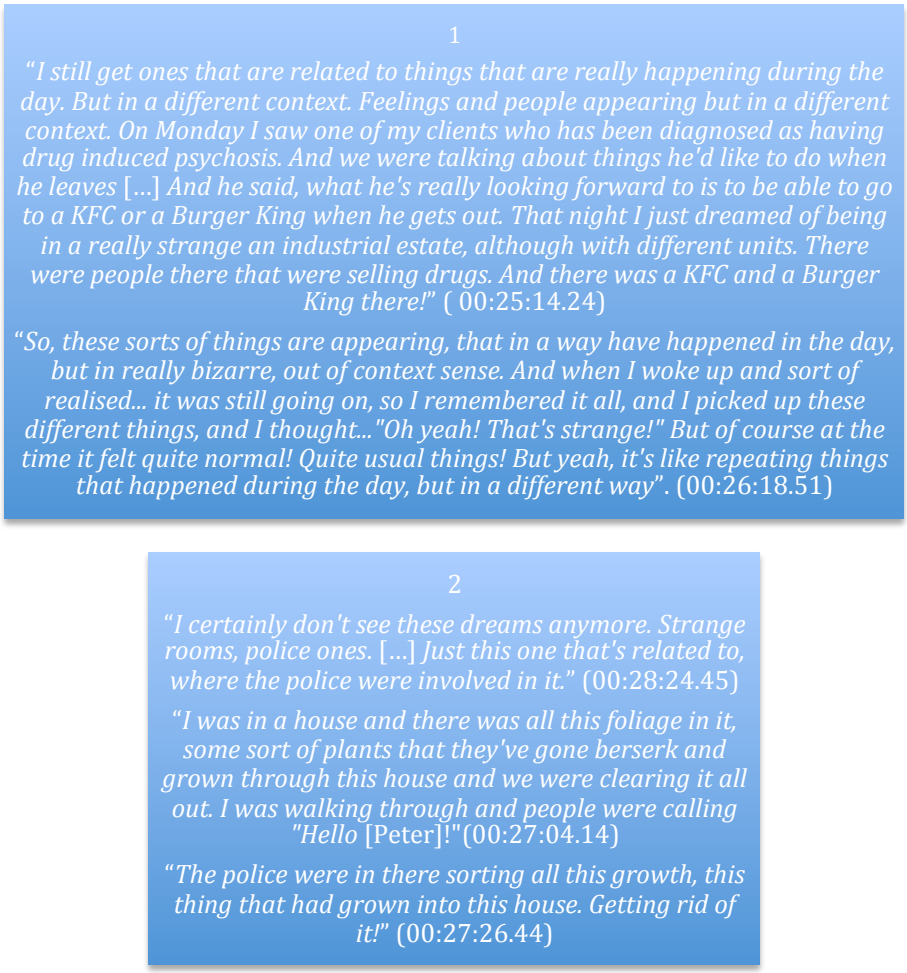


Figure 3.14 *Peter's dream experiences*

The central theme in Lola's dreams was travelling (Box 2, Figure 3.15). She viewed her dreams as particularly pleasurable (Box 4, Figure 3.15) and as a way to escape the stresses of daily life: "*I guess what I'm getting out of them is what I need, which is just rest and a break*" (Lola, 00:53:47.54). Lola also had two "significant" dreams, dreams that she considered to be deeply meaningful. In one of them she connected with her estranged father and announced to him her recent engagement (Box 3, Figure 3.15). The second dream involved the group and what seemed to be frustrations and anxieties around the inquiry process (Box 1, Figure 3.15), with Lola exclaiming:

"*You all started to come into my dreams!*" (Lola, 00:23:49.77).

Similarly, Damon's dream of "Zen masters" (Box 3, Figure 3.5), although not stated as such at the time, invoked in me the sense that it was a metaphor for the group dynamics as they were unfolding.

Figure 3.15 *Lola's dream experiences*

The "bizarreness" of dreams was also a central theme in our experiences:

"*The most bizarre things can happen in a dream, and yet you believe it's normal. But afterwards, when you're awake and you think about it, it's just absolutely bizarre and yet you believed it while it was happening!*" (Peter, 00:15:18.85).

Similarly, things that seem to be important while waking up fade away upon logical examination or sharing with others, as illustrated in Samuel's account in Box 1, Figure 3.16. Damon offered an explanation for this paradox, and argued that our defences are down when we are sleeping and it is imagination that takes control:

"*I guess that's because the analytical filter is off, isn't it*?" (Damon, 00:16:43.73).

Figure 3.16 *Samuel's dream experiences*

For myself, the most important aspect during this cycle of the inquiry was the feeling that I was "close" to achieving awareness in dreams (Box 1, Figure 3.17). In addition, I viewed dreams as useful in solving problems and overcoming dilemmas and anxieties of waking life, as illustrated in Box 2, Figure 3.17. This assumption was shared with Lola who felt that in order to overcome difficulties in waking life through dreaming, the intention had to be clearly stated:

"*That's the important part, that you need to ask. So [that] you're not just dreaming of a similar situation showing the dilemma that's already present. But if you go with it, the mind* [asks] *'How can I… ?' What do I need to know, what do I do, how can I get past this*?" (00:36:41.06)

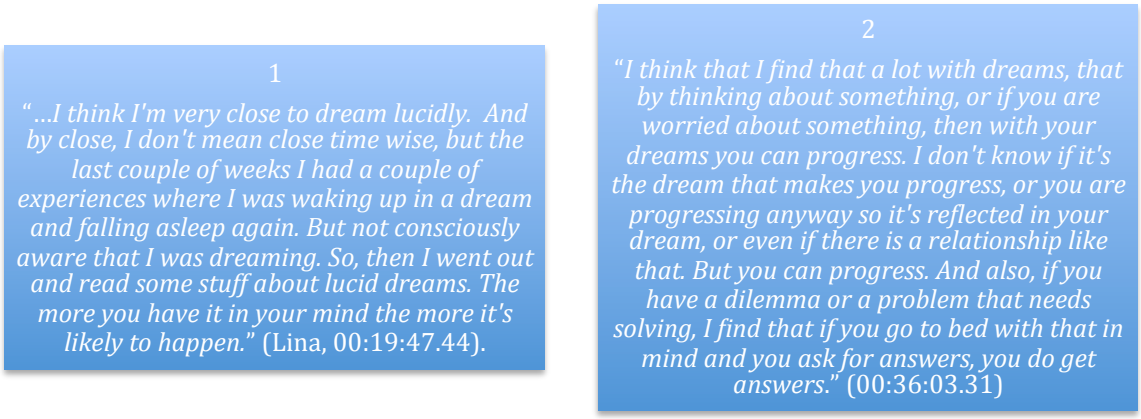


Figure 3.17 *Lina's dream experiences*

New outcomes also came up: Phil and Lola both initiated conversations about dreams in their workplace having as a starting point their involvement in the group. They found that their colleagues "*start talking about it* [dreams], *and then that sets other people off.*

It gives them the OK, that it is OK to talk about it" (Lola, 00:08:21.40). Phil also found that his colleagues were intrigued by the subject, and were posing a variety of questions.

Although we were able to distinguish between different dreams in a night, there was no distinct beginning or end to a dream; rather, they all seem to merge together:

"*They* [dreams] *all merge together, because there's several dreams in the night, so if you do remember several, they do merge. I can't ever remember where that one finished, and the other one, or the scene, or whatever is played out starts.*" (Lola, 00:14:09.37).

"*You never have titles come in the end*!" (Phil, 00:13:40.22)

3.4.2 Propositions and research questions

The fact that we replicated and expanded on the findings from the previous inquiry cycle, helped to confirm our previous propositions and research question: whether listening to music before going to sleep could affect the quality of our sleep and the content of our dreams: "*So, it's very important to have that music to go to bed with, instead of watching really bad stuff... Or just reading.*" (Lina, 00:32:10.57). We therefore decided to go ahead with the distribution of music as previously planned, while "*Keeping in mind things like mood and the blur between reality...*" (Kenneth, 01:37:34.13). Music pieces from two CDs were consequently distributed by Dropbox:

"*One is very logical, analytical piece of music. It's orchestral. But nothing arty farty. And the other one is very oceanic and freeform, so it would be interesting to see if we get different results.*" (Damon, 01:33:06.94).

More propositions were also raised, for example Damon's fascination with aboriginal dreamtime (Figure 3.18), but the ground was not fertile at this stage of the inquiry.

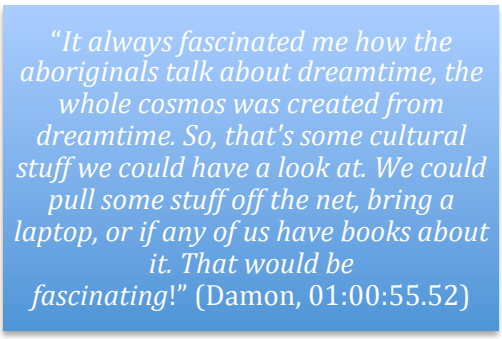


Figure 3.18 *Damon on Dreamtime*

We further agreed to "*explore the area of lucid dreaming*" in a way that "*invites criticism as well as experiences*" (Kenneth, 01:26:30.03). To that effect, we discussed "reality checks" that can trigger lucid dreaming, and I emailed the group shortly after the meeting with some guidelines and a book on lucid dreaming taken from the Web (App. 11). Our propositions and tasks were left deliberately open in order to not only incorporate conflicting experiences, but also to serve individual interests and concerns, such as Damon's interest in listening to everyone's dream experiences and to see whether there were any links with suffering.

In addition, we started sketching out propositions and methods for future inquiry cycles:

"*…choose one significant dream that we've had over a period of two weeks and then we try and draw a picture of what we remember most about it. Or, whatever comes out, try and represent that dream. Then that can lead into discussion, through looking at maybe the images...*" (Lola, 01:36:44.92).

The suggestion was that, through drawing, different aspects of dreams might be illuminated, such as colour, shape, form and memories.

"*We could draw a dream, collective dreamscapes*!" (Damon, 01:38:47.92).

3.4.3 Considerations on methodology and group dynamics

Divide and Bridging

One of the defining factors of the group dynamics was the pre-existing relationships between individual members, and Kenneth, being the group's facilitator, attempted to manage this:

"*Because I've noticed we're all sitting with our friends. And then, if our friends talk we link in with our friends, and try to go along with that. That's kind of a natural thing to do, so I thought about maybe changing where we all sit.*" (Kenneth, 00:00:32.13).

Further, despite the egalitarian and collaborative nature of Human Inquiry, I had set certain parameters that restricted individual members and set the tone and the boundaries of our inquiry:

"*A doctorate is definitely what I'm hoping to gain from this. But of course it's not just that. Because I am* ***very*** *interested in dreams, and I know they can take you to places, I am hoping to grow out of this process. I am hoping to link with people on a different level as well. And I know it has been too 'alien' the process for all that, and I think maybe it will happen at some point...*" (Lina, 00:05:23.93).

My assessment of the process as 'alien' described at least one member's experience. Samuel, although interested in the topic of dreaming, felt that discussing it is not part of life, and the process felt alien:

"*...a little bit 'alien'. To see you all every week, to come to a classroom, a cafe, and have a conversation about dreams*" (Samuel, 00:06:20.81).

Phil felt that the difficulties stemmed from our different backgrounds and expressed his hope that the group would integrate and connect as the process unfolded:

"*I think we probably will* [connect]. *I think we come from very different worlds*." (Phil, 00:05:58.62)

Consequently, what defined further the inquiry process was our perception of individual differences. In particular, as a group we seemed to have difficulty incorporating and exploring Samuel's experiences:

"[The way you relate to dreams is] …*positive in comparison to mine, and a different way of relating to it.* […] *I haven't really thought about dreams in the same way, the sort of pleasant kind of experience. Or, as something to pursue or enjoy, that kind of thing. So, I think that's why I probably go along with* [the process] *a little bit, just trying it out.... to relate to in some sense*" (Samuel, 01:00:14.39).

Samuel's experience was acknowledged within the group:

"*I see where* [Samuel] *comes from, because* [dreams] *have been interesting to us for a*

long time. We have been aware of our dreams a lot, but, for you, it's completely new, it's like... "Ooh!" It's a new thing that you're just becoming aware of!" (Lola, 01:01:34.41).

According to Samuel, dreams were neither significant nor pleasant, something that was challenged within the group as a contradiction in terms:

"*But, again, just saying they are not significant, but then in the next sentence that they are not particularly pleasant either.*" (Damon, 01:01:57.48).

The conflict seemed to focus on the treatment of dreams as a means of self-discovery and developing awareness, and this became clearer when the conversation turned to techniques for triggering lucid dreaming. Kenneth wondered whether it was possible to go "*along with something like lucid dream which is all about the control*" (Kenneth, 00:56:22.62), while for Samuel the concept of lucid dreaming:

"*…doesn't make any sense to me. It almost doesn't sound possible. As a concept*." (Samuel, 01:02:59.33).

Further, Samuel compared the experience of lucid dreaming with witnessing ghosts and argued that this did not fit his perception of a "sound scientific person". Despite his objections and fears that "*My sort of background and my way of looking at things might interrupt other people's experience*" (Samuel, 01:02:29.68) and that he may "*rip it to shreds*" (Samuel, 01:05:04.3) though, he decided that he still wanted to be a part of the inquiry, because he was curious to "*see where it goes*" (Samuel, 01:05:04.30).

The scientific value of the inquiry was further scrutinised:

"*I'm thinking about it from a research standpoint. I used to be involved in a lot of meditation groups and new age things, and all sorts of stuff. And I've always witnessed the groups getting into a place where they paralyzed themselves getting nowhere. Because they make it into a religion that nobody can then question*." (Kenneth, 01:06:09.80).

Therefore, we acknowledged that there was a need to look critically at our findings. As Damon stated:

"*Gandhi has been one of the greatest religious leaders of our time, and he said himself that anything that can't be held under the light of reason should be dismissed anyway*!" (Damon, 01:06:56.06).

To that effect, Samuel was tasked with playing the role of the *Devil's Advocate*[7], challenging our statements and trying to find other explanations for our claims.

Despite the conflict-ridden discussion, the meeting ended on a positive note as we felt that we had a clear action plan and we had "*narrowed in on the method*" (Kenneth, 01:37:34.13). It was agreed that the fourth meeting would take place in a pub, and with no dedicated facilitator's role in the absence of anyone volunteering:

"*So, we're leaderless, we're drawing, and we're listening to music! In a pub!*" (Kenneth, 01:41:04.01).

[7] Validity procedure, adapted from Reason & Heron (2008).

3.5 Fourth stage (Fourth reflection phase)

This fourth reflection stage was an opportunity to further explore disturbances that lay hidden, and the meeting was structured around a discussion on the future of the inquiry. Lola and Kenneth were not present in this meeting and Phil sent his apologies for this and the following three meetings. The meeting took place in a pub.

3.5.1 Feedback from action phase and Findings

In the week before the meeting I had a dream in which Damon approached me asking for support because Lola was stressed (Figure 3.19). Damon disclosed that Lola was indeed stressing out about a deadline that was approaching, and this was the reason why she was not able to attend the meeting.

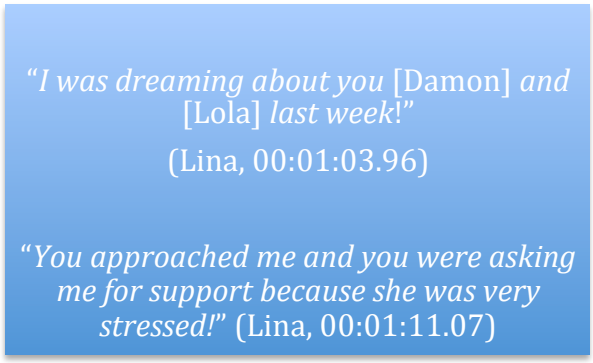


Figure 3.19 *Lina's dream experiences*

We ascertained that most of our dreams relate to concerns and problems from the previous day or from the past. Some of us were able to identify this only because of our participation in the inquiry, and wouldn't have done so otherwise (see for example Peter's experiences in Figure 3.20), and so felt that the process was valid. The mere fact of "looking" at our experiences resulted in noticing and shaping them (Box 3, Fig. 3.20). In addition, some of us went a step further, we were able to see past the immediate

images of a dream, and to relate recurrent themes to where we found ourselves emotionally (Box 2, Figure 3.20).

Figure 3.20 *Peter's dream experiences*

In turn, dreams relating to general concerns of waking consciousness had a direct effect on our mood immediately after waking up, and for Peter this was a troubling experience: "[…] *that sense of difficulty it only lasts for about five or ten minutes after I wake up, and then I'm ok again. So, I get this sense, sometimes, of doom*" (Peter, 00:08:31.91), suggesting a continuum of awareness that spans between being asleep and being awake (Figure 3.21). Peter learned through the action phase to expect this 'sense of doom', and was able to reassure himself and overcome it: "*…to know, it's only going to last about ten minutes, and then I'll be alright again!*" (Peter, 00:09:19.48).

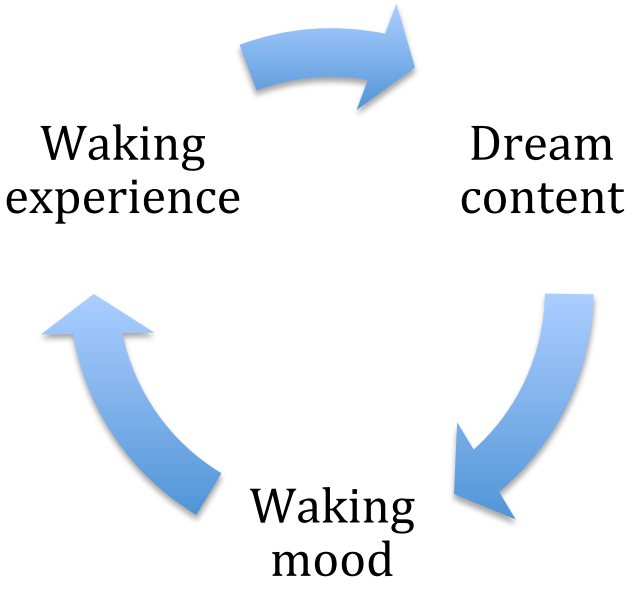


Figure 3.21 *Awareness Continuum*

This feeling of "doom", an exaggerated sense of "*being out of control*" was shared to some extend with Samuel, who found that the music that we were tasked with listening "*…softens all that, it takes the edge off it all!*" (Samuel, 00:09:37.79). Peter believed that music had this calming effect because:

"*…it takes all these thoughts away and moves them somewhere else before I go to sleep. That sort of takes the edge off, that feeling I get first thing in the morning.*" (00:10:13.61).

The proposition of achieving awareness within a dream as a means to further explore and resolve emotional issues arose again, and while some of us were not able "*to get anywhere near it*" (Peter, 00:10:40.83), Samuel read on lucid dreaming and had a dream that night that he associated with lucidity (Figure 3.21). This was a "strange" dream, and

Samuel disclosed that he was trying "*not to think about it too much*" (00:12:34.08) out of fear that it would lead him to dismiss the experience. As a result of this experience, Samuel realised that the calendar on the wall was affecting his dreams, possibly because it was the last thing he could see before he fell asleep, and so he decided to move it: "*Plus, I've moved my calendar since*!" (Samuel, 00:12:02.46).

Betty noticed a "*strange coincidence*": over a few weeks she has been remembering far more dreams than usually, which she attributed to her changing her diet "*eating healthily, and I've just been eating loads of fruits, lots of vegetables, green, like a healthy balanced diet, no junk food, no fat food, nothing!*" (Betty, 00:13:52.64). Thus, we proposed to investigate in the future whether there is indeed a link between our diet and dreaming.

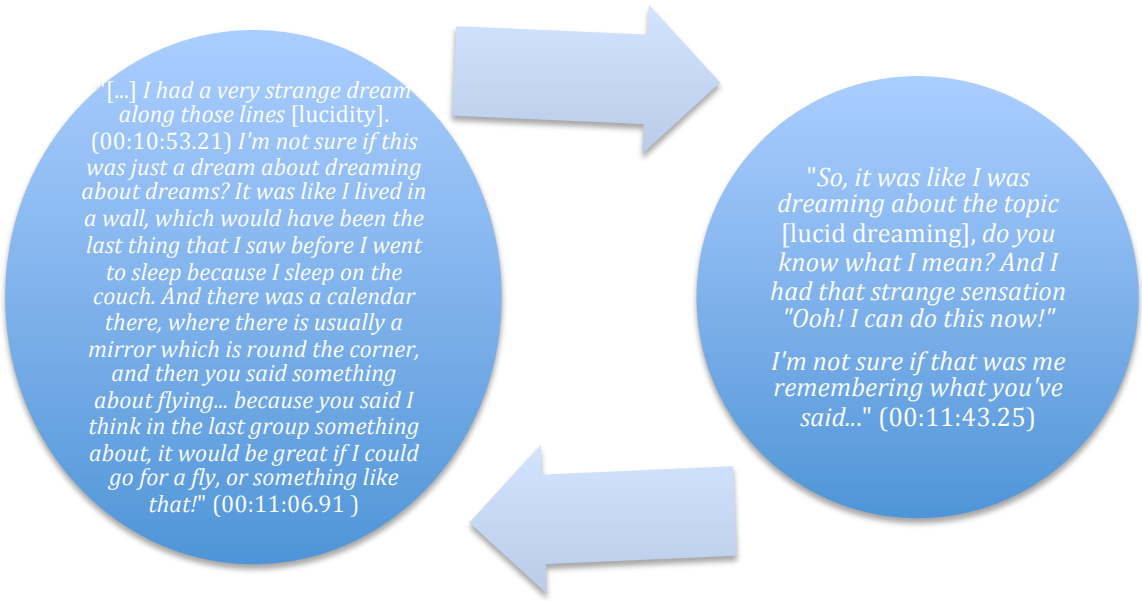


Figure 3.22 *Samuel's experience with "lucidity"*

As we were approaching the closure of our inquiry we were becoming more conscious of how different we all were:

"*…we are finding out that, even though we share consciousness and we all share the fact that we dream, we are all approaching this from completely individual angles! We are finding out that none of us think the same, never mind dream the same*!" (Damon, 00:29:58.81 & 00:30:10.87).

These differences were becoming clear through the methodology, and were also having direct ramifications on the methodology itself, as illustrated in the next part of the report.

3.5.2 Considerations on methodology and group dynamics

3.5.3 Divide and Bridging

In the weeks following a polarised and eventful third meeting, I reflected on the group dynamics and my own inexperience with group facilitation and in managing the conflict that was seemingly escalating. I was also conscious that individual members were struggling with both the inquiry process and the topic of dreams. This had the potential to lead to some of them feeling "pushed out", and could therefore compromise authentic group collaboration. Further, I was feeling responsible not only for the quality of the research outcomes, but also for everyone who was giving up their time to support this endeavour. At this point, I was feeling pushed into a leadership role, and I questioned whether there was indeed common ground for a truly collaborative inquiry. In order to explore the group's perspective, I instigated a group discussion. My anxieties are shown in Figure 3.23.

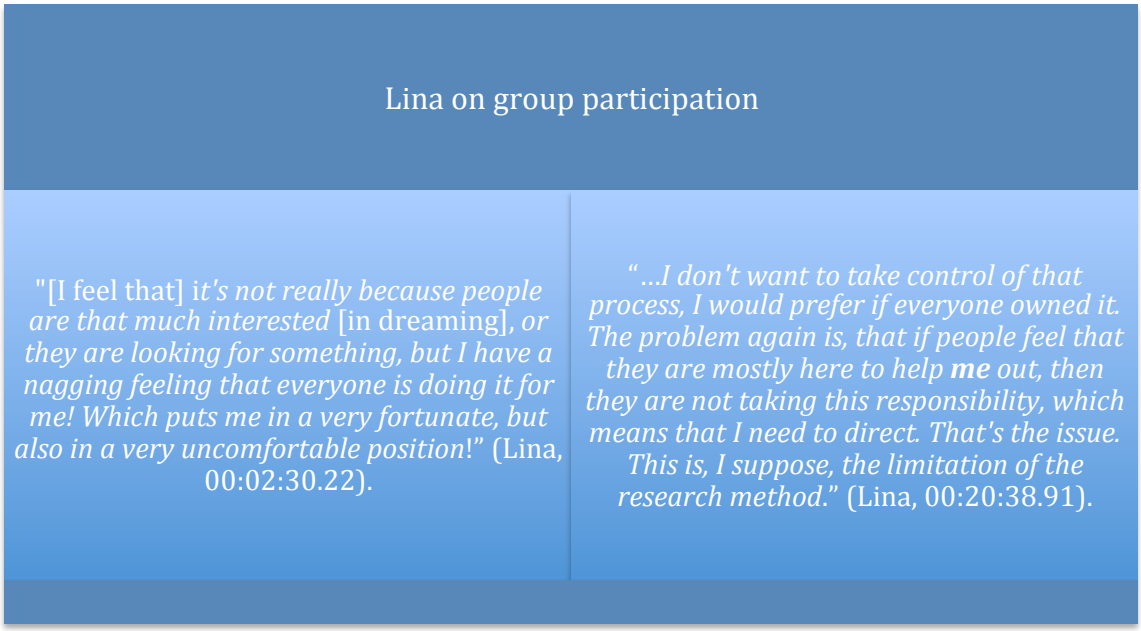


Figure 3.23 *Lina on co-operative inquiry*

As a result of my prompting, *chaos* manifested in the form of different and conflicting views, and this made our outlook on the future of the inquiry blurry. We found ourselves in the uncomfortable space of trying to accommodate individual needs, while also not losing sight of the overall picture and our own individual position in it.

The overwhelming feeling within the group was that we were "*polarised*" (Samuel, 00:51:20.26) and we acknowledged that this could be a downfall because not everyone in the group was "*passionate*" about dreams (Betty, 00:51:11.54) and the conversation did not "*flow*" (Lina, 00:04:17.43).

Samuel considered the choice of methodology "brave" and questioned its' scientific value:

"*It's very open. And the world we live in at the moment, and psychology, is very open to challenge!*" (Samuel, 00:49:41.11).

Figure 3.24 further shows Samuel's views, inhibitions and anxieties around the inquiry, which were shared in part by Betty:

"*I was interested in the method because I would have thought you would have needed a bit more structure. And I think I've struggled with the lack of structure and the general consensus that there isn't a particular direction. So, that's been a challenge*" (Betty, 00:06:28.09).

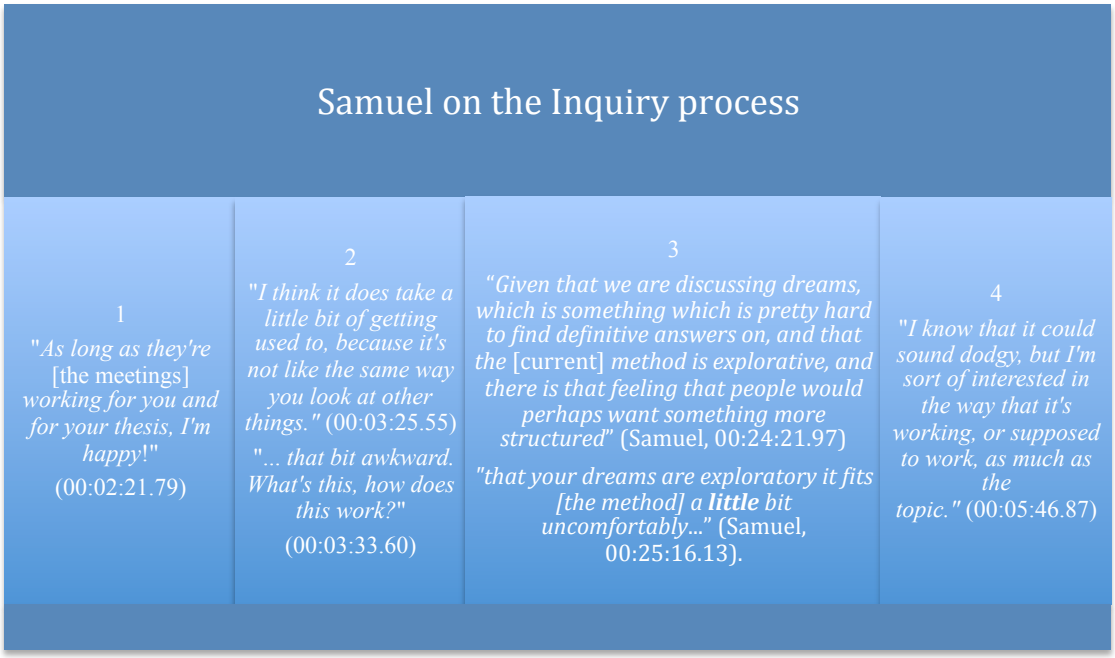


Figure 3.24 *Samuel on co-operative inquiry*

On the other end of the spectrum, Peter thrived in and through the inquiry process (Figure 3.25), and felt that he was gaining a number of insights:

"[The inquiry] *It's worth in that way for me, it made me see things that I haven't noticed!*" (Peter, 00:07:45.65).

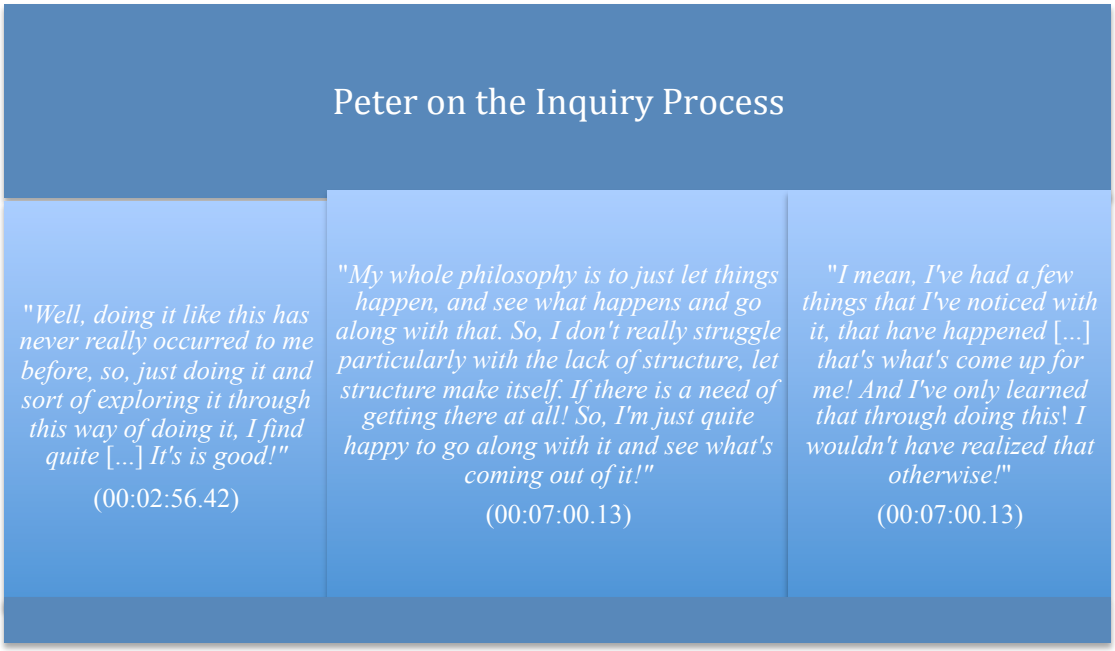


Figure 3.25 *Peter on Co-operative inquiry*

Similarly to Peter, Damon wished to continue with the experiential form of the inquiry as it stood, and attributed the divide within the group to how we each approached life:

"*…How I live and do stuff all the time, when I walk I am meditating, when I read I'm actually approaching it like I'm martial arts' training. A lot of my education was about how to approach everyday menial tasks. Just like the essence of Zen Buddhism is 'What do you do when you're eating your breakfast? When you're washing your clothes?' It's that kind of attitude that I approach life with. Obviously, to say that to one person, and another person* [when] *they don't have experience… And* [I don't want to have an] *end gain either, so, I appreciate your open-ended form, no particular line of inquiry method.*" (00:32:11.84).

Further, given the individual approaches and conflicts within the group, Damon considered the ethical parameters of the Inquiry. He expressed fears about "deeper"

tasks we could potentially undertake, and warned how these could affect us differently, even have a negative effect on some of us, as we approached life so differently:

"*What might be fun to one person it could be a complete nightmare to another person, so I think it would be quite dangerous to have an end goal, in some respects*" (Damon, 00:30:40.97).

We discussed a number of options and ways forward with a view to balance the opposing dynamics within the group including an *Apollonian* type of inquiry rather than the *Dionysian* we initially adopted, individual interviews or "structured" group meetings where I would be guiding and directing the group, IPA, having an "end goal", revisiting the research aims, just "having a structure", having an agenda determined by the initiator, brainstorming, and a number of different combinations of the above.

Samuel questioned how the topic of dreams would fit any other research method, struggled with the apparent ambiguity, and argued that as human beings we seek structure in our lives. He believed that both dreaming and the nature of the collaborative inquiry challenged this need for structure, which led to an "*uncomfortable*" and "*awkward*" feeling (Boxes 2 & 3, Figure 3.24). On the other hand, Damon's views were dramatically different, as he did not view either the inquiry or his dreaming experiences as unstructured, and felt that life itself need not be structured. Figure 3.26 illustrates the opposing and conflicting forces within the group, as reflected on Samuel's and Damon's words.

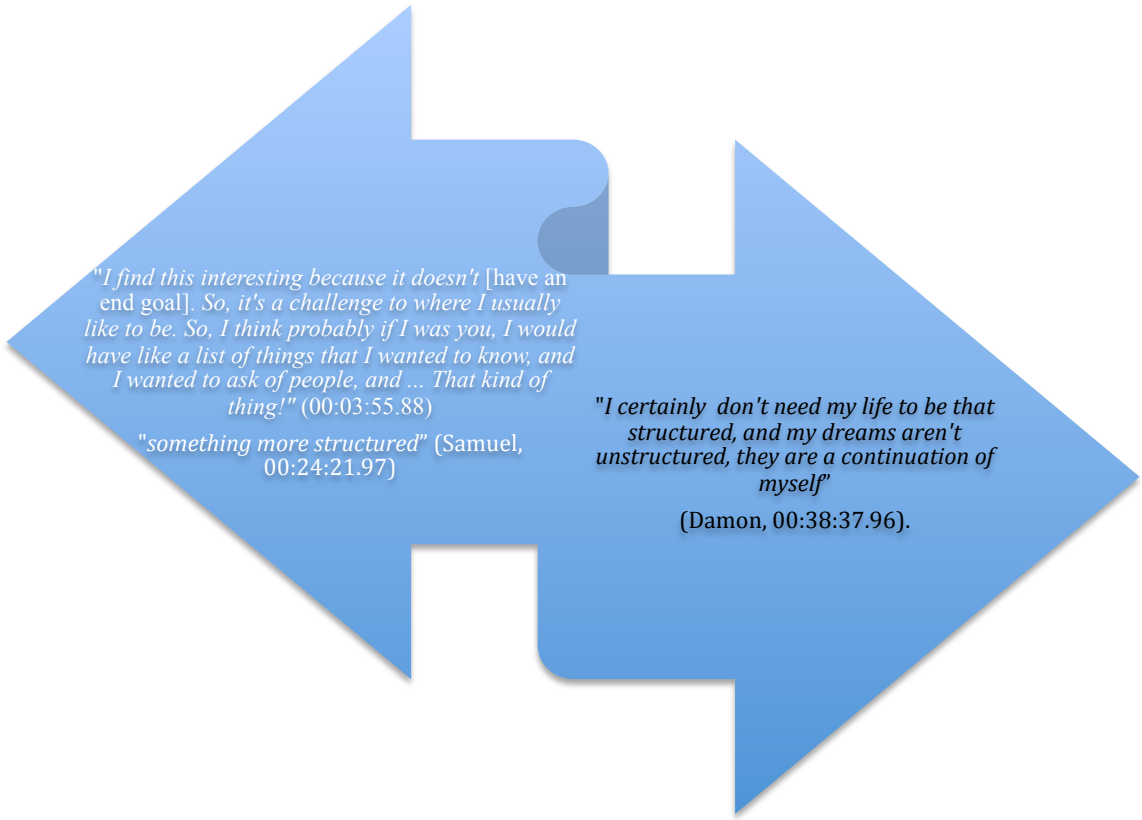


Figure 3.26 *Opposing forces within the inquiry*

These two opposing and conflicting forces were by no means confined to Samuel and Damon; rather they were tendencies in the wider group and were inherent to various degrees in all of us. They spoke volumes not only about how we viewed the methodology and the topic of dreams, but also, and by extension, about how each one of us strived to achieve eudaimonia[8], reach happiness and flourishing. This is the eternal struggle of humans on how to be καλὸς κἀγαθός (kalos kagathos), how to live a "good life"[9].

Thus, it was becoming apparent that the differing views were revealing deeply held convictions on the nature of reality, with some coming into direct conflict with the epistemological basis of the methodology. As discussed previously, co-operative inquiry

[8] In Aristotelian terms, everyone agrees that eudaimonia is the highest good for humans, but there is substantial disagreement on how to achieve this.

[9] Werner Jaeger summarises kalokagathia as "*the chivalrous ideal of the complete human personality, harmonious in mind and body, foursquare in battle and speech, song and action*" (1945, p.13).

assumes that we are all agents of change and transformation, and that our interactions with each other, the world of dreaming and the wider world constantly and dynamically give form to an ever-changing participatory reality.

By contrast, there was a strong tendency within the group to view reality as external and objective: The need for "direction", "more structure", and an "end goal" implied that reality was viewed as independent and outside of oneself. For example, Samuel's decision to be a part of the group and in a sense objectively "observe" how the process was "*supposed to work*" (Box 4, Figure 3.24), pointed to an assumption that personal involvement had no bearing on the happenings of the inquiry.

As the group was becoming more conscious of these conflicting, deeply held and life defining convictions, so our collaboration seemed muddier. There was a moment of magic however, and a subsequent breakthrough, when Damon used a metaphor to compare the inquiry process to Indian classical music:

"*People presume* [that music played on sitar] *is free form, like jazz improvisation, but it's actually really structured. It's meant to symbolise Mother Earth, and springs of water coming from mountaintops. So, it starts as a suggestion, just a trickle, and then it joins a course, where waters flowed before, so a trickle becomes a stream, and the stream becomes a brook, becomes a small current, becomes a radiant torrent! But it always has structure! Because it's got banks to flow in. But it is completely free within that structure!*" (Damon, 00:37:07.22).

This powerful metaphor converted the chaos into a new level of *order*, and a consensus was quickly achieved within the group that an end goal was not necessary, and that perhaps we were not lost at all, but, to use Samuel's words:

"*We are doing that anyway! Like, I think, the idea of exploration. It's naturally trying to find a course anyway, we are picking certain topics, and certain things, and certain recurrent themes are coming out anyway, and we're looking to pursue certain things. So, I think that we are... almost looking to give ourselves that structure!*" (Samuel, 00:39:18.57).

3.5.4 Propositions and methodology

In order to give ourselves a structure, to define our own banks, we decided that in our next meeting, with all members present, we would:

a) Summarise our journey so far, and
b) Produce a mind map: visually represent our experiences and common themes.

We were hoping that a summary would help to ground us in the process and remind us of our original aims. In addition, if all of us were "down on our knees" and dynamically involved in the drawing of a mind map, we would be able to collaboratively define our own parameters and find a way forward.

By the end of the meeting though, the limitations and obstacles were already evident with Damon expecting the summary of our journey to be "*helpful and provocative*" (Damon, 00:40:41.19), and Samuel questioning the method and/in relation to the topic of dreams, and wondering whether or not there was or should be an end goal.

3.6 Fifth stage (Fifth reflection phase)

Our fifth meeting took place in a coffee shop with all members present except Phil, who in effect discontinued after this point. I summarised the experience of the group to date as follows:

- Topic
- Aims and findings individually and collectively
- Propositions deriving from findings and possible future areas of inquiry
- Our difficulties with the process

The summary of the inquiry so far aimed to ground us in the process and remind us of our journey, and co-inquirers agreed that the summary reflected well their experiences. At this point I encouraged individual members to "air their views" and consider whether there was common ground for working together. I also reminded the group of the choice to opt out.

3.6.1 Feedback from action phase and Findings

We perceived our busy waking lives and the lack of time as forcing our dreaming lives to a back seat:

"*…you wake up and you have to rush. Which is basically our inner life, isn't it? You don't pay as much attention to how you are, where you're at in the moment, we prefer to rush into things*." (Lina, 00:14:58.52).

So, we realised that dedicating more time to the action phases of the inquiry may be equal to dedicating more time to our inner self and our personal needs as opposed to

external demands on us and our time. There was already evidence from previous cycles that we had started noticing unhelpful habits and changing our ways, for example Betty had changed her diet (Phase 3) and Samuel had changed his sleeping habits and, as a result, he improved his sleep quality (Phase 4).

Once again, we categorised our dreams into two different and distinct types, dreams that can be easily linked to everyday events and emotional states, and "bizarre" dreams that were "*really real and vivid*" (Lola, 00:30:29.24), came "*out of nowhere*" (Kenneth, 00:30:23.72), and were odd and surprising. This second category of dreams created in the dreamer a sense of curiosity and the need for further interpretation. In lightness, we attempted to interpret the "lemon drizzle cake" dream that Betty had the previous night and resulted in her ordering a lemon cake that morning (Figure 3.27). Betty discussed how she cognitively processed the image of the cake while still asleep, and changed it into something more appealing. She described this process as an "element of lucidity" in the dream:

"*…the first time I looked at the cake in my dream, it had raisins in it. And I looked and I went: 'I don't like raisins!' I turned away and did something else, turned back, and there were no raisins in the cake! And I was like: 'I can eat it now!'*" (Betty, 00:35:12.50).

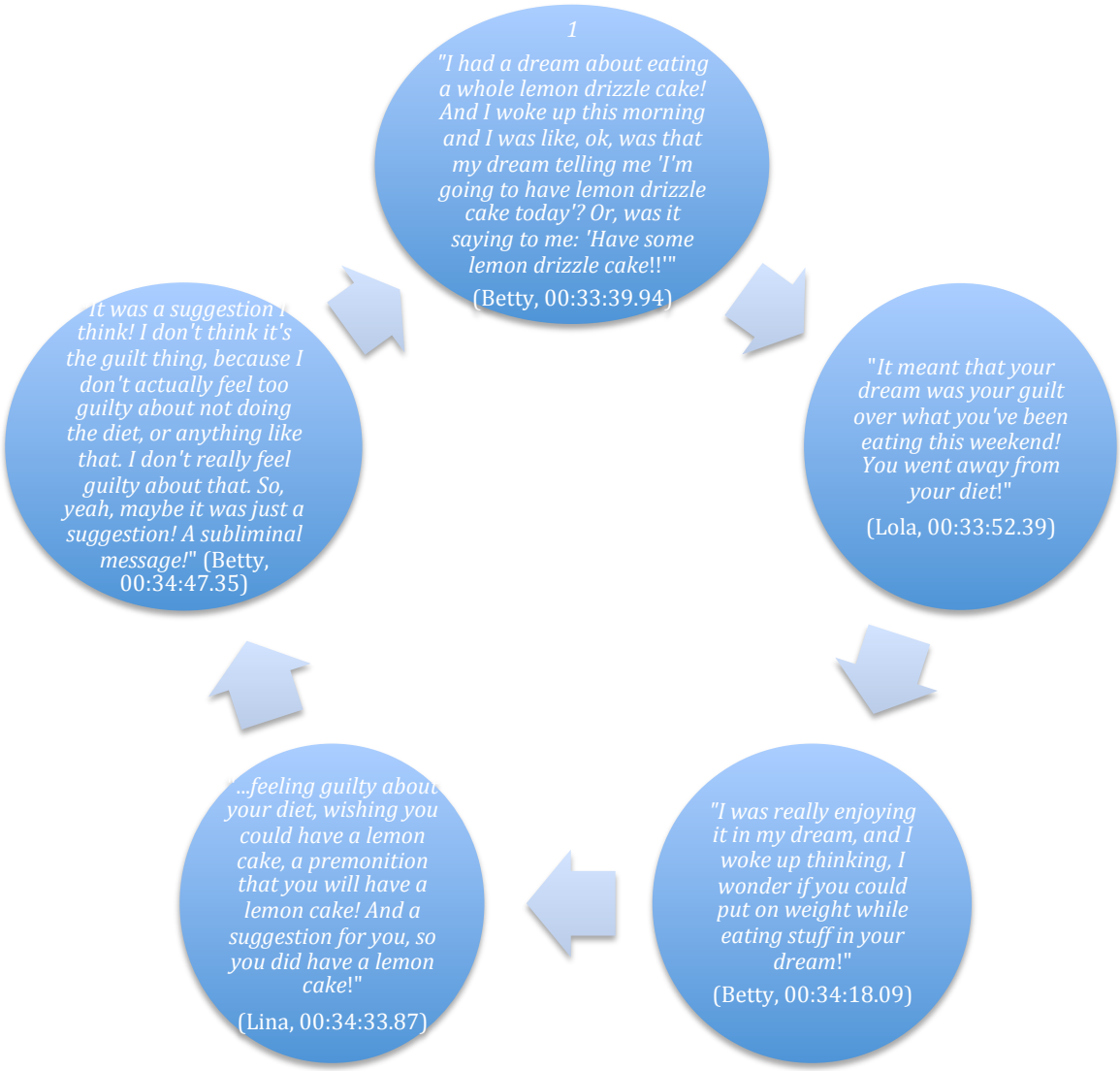


Figure 3.27 *Attempting to interpret Betty's "lemon drizzle cake" dream*

In the weeks prior to this fifth meeting I had quit smoking and suffered with nightmares, headaches and disturbed sleep. Figure 3.28 illustrates a dream I had and I associated with withdrawal symptoms from tobacco.

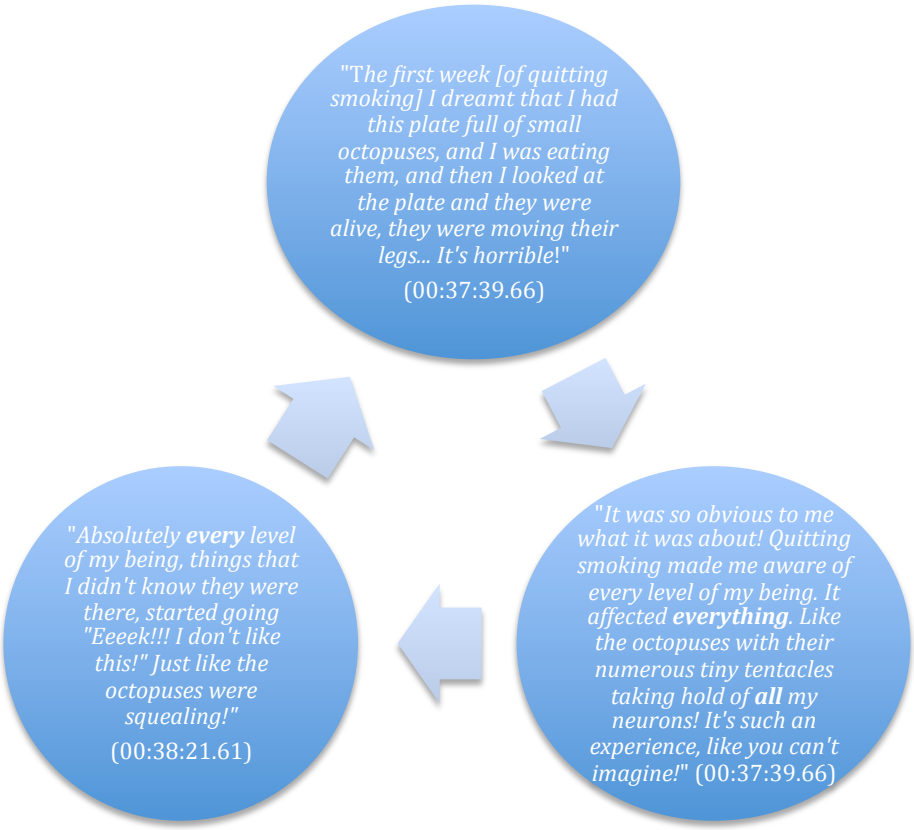


Figure 3.28 *Lina's "tiny octopuses" dream and her interpretation*

Betty reported that she enjoyed daydreaming and that this was not a conscious process as she felt she had no control over it:

"*I've had a whole week like that, I just find myself... I literally just stop on my tracks and just stare in space and in my mind. I'll tell you what, it happens when I'm driving as well!*" (Betty, 00:31:47.13).

3.6.2 Findings on the Self and Divide

The Self in our dreams

Kenneth discussed the difficulties he was having with the inquiry process in relation to our propositions on lucid dreaming, a concept that he dismissed as fictional. Consequently, lucidity was the apple of discord once again, and, stemming from this, our conflicting beliefs about what the "Self" is, and the stance each of us took in the world both intellectually and experientially came to the forefront. It would not be an overstatement to say that tensions were palpable and feelings were running high, although for the most part were left unsaid. Kenneth's views on lucid dreaming in relation to the Self are illustrated on Figure 3.29.

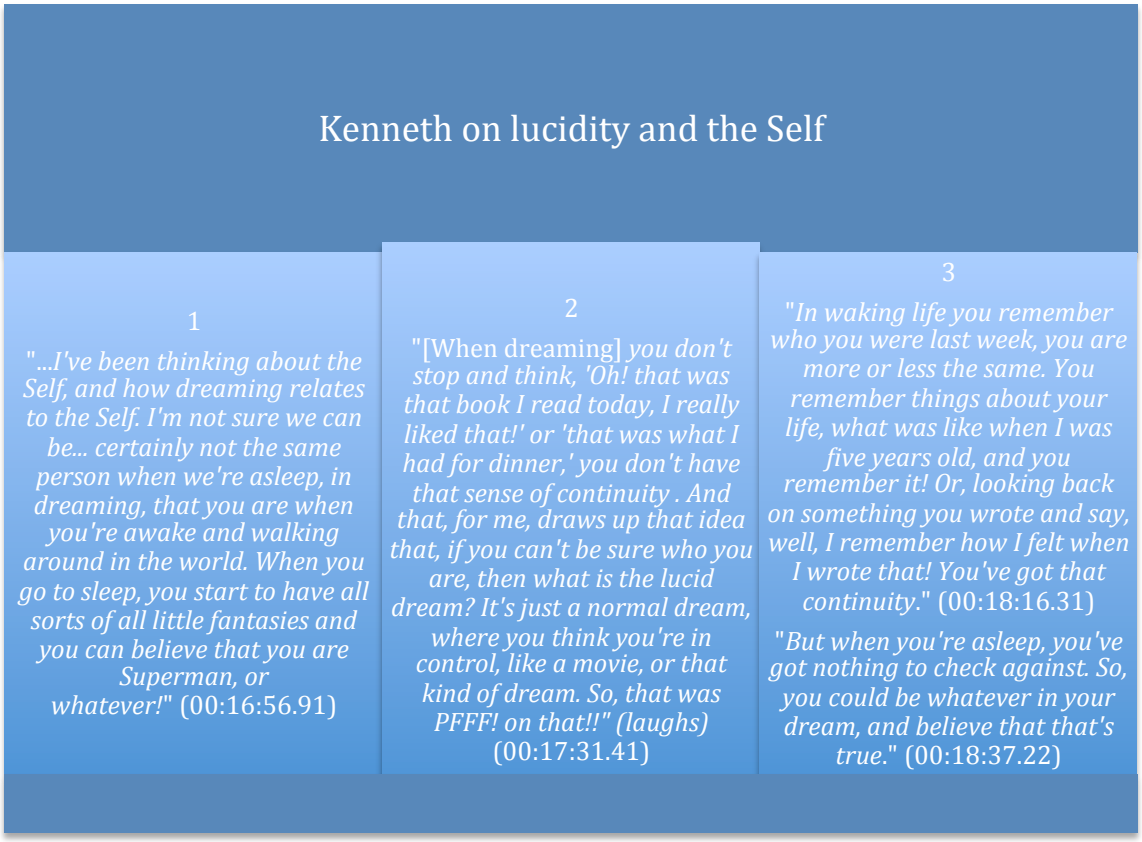


Figure 3.29 *Kenneth's views on dreams, lucidity and the Self*

Although I shared Kenneth's rationalisation on some of the differences between dreaming and waking states, I felt that lucidity is not a "made up" state, but an alternative state of consciousness that brings awareness to the "normal" experience of dreaming. In contrast, Kenneth argued that achieving lucidity within a dream is a logical impossibility because there is no continuity of the Self (Boxes 1&3, Figure 3.29), so if one believes they are aware in their dream, then this is just another irrational dream element:

"[because there is] *no sense of continuity that you can be sure of, then the lucid dream could be just another ordinary dream, where the novelty is the* ***idea*** *of control. Much like watching a movie and you're not in control, but you* ***think*** *you're in control*." (Kenneth, 00:18:57.86).

Kenneth's rationalisation on the lack of continuity differentiated from our experiences up to this point, which indicated strong links between experiences of waking life and our dream content, and suggested that there was at least some continuity of the Self. In addition, they came into direct conflict with individual experiences. Betty for example had described how she remembered in her "cake" dream that she does not like raisins (Betty, 00:35:12.50), and Damon had previously asserted that he dreams lucidly and his dreams are "*a continuation of myself*" (Figure 3.26). Indeed, Kenneth himself had argued in our introductory meeting that he was able to direct his attention in a way that was influencing his dream: he was able to go back in the dream he was having, and resume from the point he had left it (Kenneth, 00:26:45.55; 00:26:47.42, in first reflection phase).

Betty and Kenneth both argued that conflicting interpretations of lucidity depend on beliefs about the Self, and Betty further differentiated in her interpretation of the Self:

"*The Self, the experience of the Self that happens in the dream, is actually more* ***real****, than* […] *what the 'true' Self actually is, because there shouldn't be a sense of continuity, as far as my beliefs are concerned. Life is what happens in the instant,* ***now****, and there shouldn't be this past present and future sense, because time isn't linear.*" (Betty, 00:19:31.11).

Kenneth's admonitions and Betty's views were shared and opposed to various degrees by the rest of us. Interestingly, Kenneth and Betty were not present in the previous meeting and yet the conflict echoed the opposing forces of the fourth reflection phase (Figure 3.26). This was further confirmation that the differences within the group were running deeper than any of us had anticipated and were relating to our attitudes and how we strived to live our lives, to our beliefs on the nature of reality and the ontological stance we took. These differences were distilled through discussing the nature of lucidity, with one side dismissing the experiences of the other and accusing them of being "spiritual":

"*There is a certain element of... religion, or spirituality in that. Or, if you believe that that's the way it is, then all theories extend from that option* […] *So, then your dreams are lucid and actually you are in control, or it's all just made up. Fantasy. Fiction. Like all other dreams*." (Kenneth, 00:20:37.20).

3.6.3 Methodology, Propositions and research question

No one took the offer to opt out at this point. Peter confirmed that he was finding the process helpful and has gained insights that he would not have otherwise. He expressed his wish to carry on and dedicate more energy to the action phase and in a more focused way. This was a sentiment that was shared by Lola and myself who both felt that we were not as committed to the process as we wished. Damon expressed his desire to "*see it through and see what comes out of it*" (00:25:17.43), while Samuel acknowledged that the inquiry brought dreaming to the forefront of his awareness and this in turn made him notice that his sleep was poor and as a result he had improved his sleeping habits. Finally, Kenneth stated that he found talking about dreaming useful but was ambivalent about his membership in the group. Individual accounts on group membership are shown on Figure 3.30.

Figure 3.30 *Individual accounts on membership in the Inquiry*

We decided that the meetings would be held two-weekly instead of three-weekly to keep the momentum. As the co-ordinator I was tasked with giving a summary of the previous reflection phase at the beginning of each meeting and to produce an agenda. We all felt that we needed to dedicate more time and effort in the process, and the consensus was once again to not have an "end goal".

We postponed the task of the mind mapping for the following meeting. We decided that the next action phase would concern us improving our quality of sleep by listening to music and changing our routine. We would also continue to look for links between our dreams and waking life. Surprisingly, given the objections on awareness in dreams, most of us decided to continue exploring dream lucidity, while Lola chose to look into dream interpretation instead. The proposition was that lucidity and interpretation would help to further illuminate aspects of dreams and themes that were coming up.

3.7 Sixth Stage (Sixth Reflection Phase)

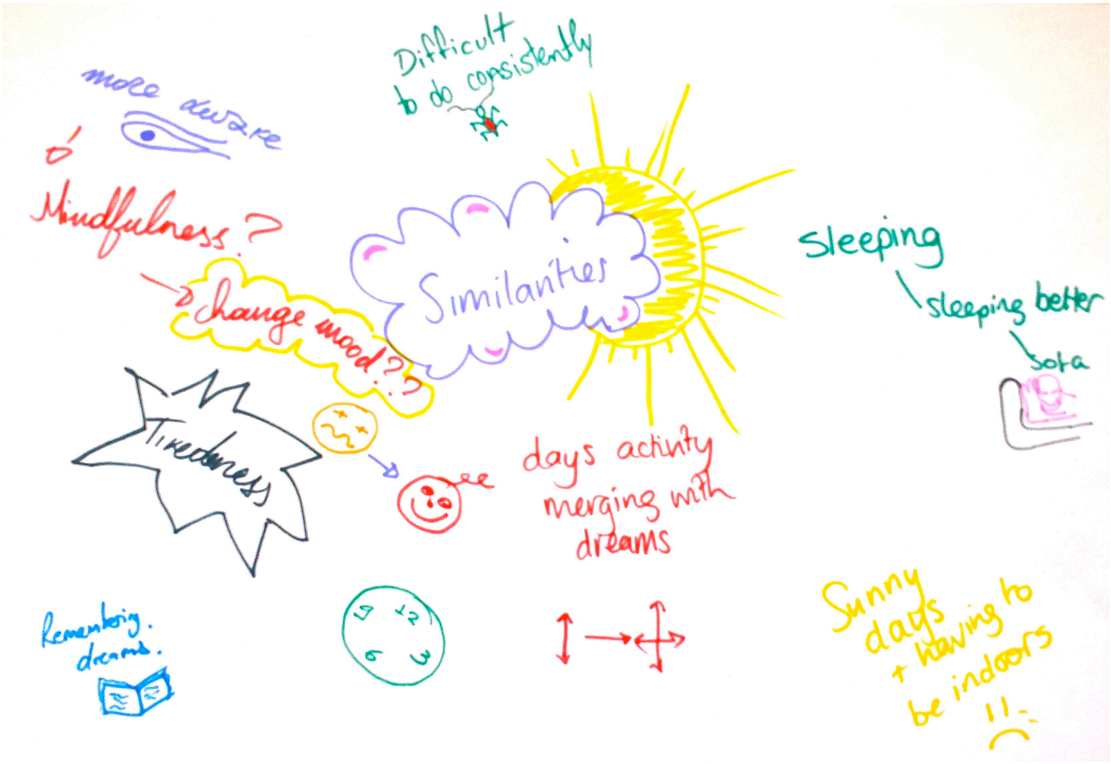
The meeting took place in a café, and Peter sent his apologies. There is no audio file of this meeting. Rather, and as proposed in the third stage of the Inquiry, this sixth reflection phase revolved around collectively creating a "mind map" (Drawing 3.1). This map is a visual illustration of our journey so far, the common themes and experiences of the group, and the transformations that were taking place as a result of our involvement with the Inquiry.

The collaborative map is self-explanatory. On the one hand, we focused on the practical aspects of our sleeping patterns. On the other hand, we highlighted the obstacles and difficulties we were experiencing in relation to our involvement with the Inquiry itself,

and by extension with our dream lives. Thus, we overlooked the complexity and the richness of our journey in favour of finding common ground.

In addition, we highlighted that our involvement with our dream lives, the intention to remember dreams and the process of making links with our waking life, resulted in increased awareness with the potential to improve our mood.

The production of the map, in all its simplicity, was by no means an easy task. As anticipated, it was proving progressively harder to find common ground and to develop such parameters as were necessary for an authentic collaboration to be sustained.



Drawing 3.1 *Collective mind map*

By collectively and dynamically drawing a map, we hoped to affirm the metaphorical nature of our understandings, to define our own banks and to find a way forward. However, by the end of the meeting, the limitations and the polarisation were becoming more tangible, and ended with some of us questioning whether the Inquiry was still viable.

In order to include in our outcomes these personal aspects that were making the journey rich and worthwhile, we decided that the next action phase would involve us drawing a personal map of our subjective experiences. Producing such a drawing would also serve to "bring it all together" and mark the closure of the Inquiry.

3.8 Seventh stage (Seventh reflection phase)

Lina, Kenneth, Samuel and Peter were present. Betty sent her apologies, while Lola and Damon went to the wrong place by mistake. Instead, I met with Lola and Damon separately on a later date. This seventh meeting took place in University premises. The transcript is divided in two parts because the battery of the voice recorder ran out during the meeting.

3.8.1 Feedback from action phase and Findings

Peter was not present in the previous meeting and so did not produce a "map" of his personal experiences. He reported not making any progress with the techniques for inducing lucid dreams and therefore he had paused his attempts in this action phase. He further confirmed his findings from previous stages, namely that some of his dreams related to happenings from the day before (Box 1, Figure 3.31).

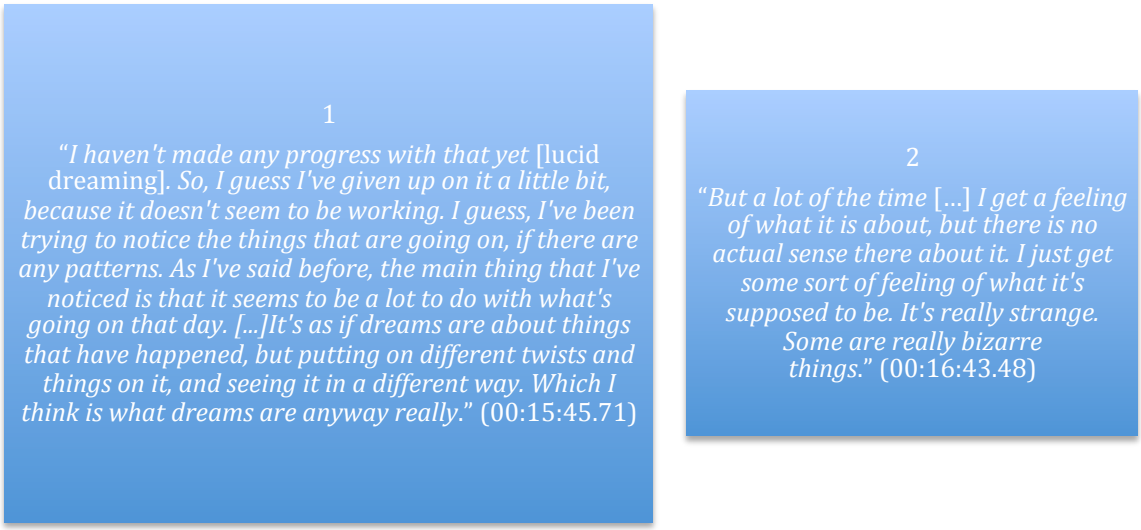


Figure 3.31 *Peter's dream experiences*

However, other dreams were "really bizarre", but seemed perfectly normal and natural at the time. Peter stated that although he had "a feeling" of what they were about, he could not make any logical connections with everyday occurrences (Box 2, Figure 3.31). He used the example of his dream of "St. Jude's House" to illustrate the point (Figure 3.32).

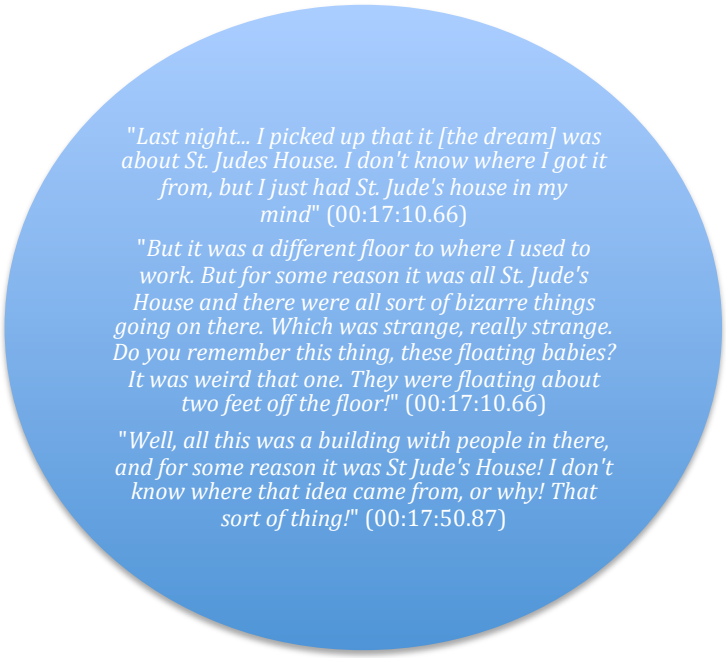


Figure 3.32 *Peter's dream of "St. Jude's House"*

Upon further exploration within the group, Peter was able to connect at least one element of the dream, St. Jude's House, with watching the film "Lord of the Rings" the previous night. A Dwarf in the film, Gimly, reminded him of an ex-colleague with whom they used to work together in St. Jude's House: "*And he* [Gimly the Dwarf] *took his helmet off and I thought: 'Oh my God, it's Jonathan Beaver!'*" (Peter, 00:18:26.16). Peter also linked the "strange and repetitive dreams" he was experiencing with pressures at work and an important deadline that was approaching.

Peter's "St. Jude's House" dream was used by Samuel as "the perfect example" to illustrate the theory that dreams are "*just the processing of information*":

"*There was probably a sequence of things you thought through the day, that clicked off other memories while you were sleeping and then, today, we made sense of it.*" (Samuel, 00:12:40.01/ part2).

Relating to our findings that dreams affect our waking mood, I reported having a significant dream on the night I was moving house, the feeling of which haunted me for the rest of the week.

Samuel and Kenneth revealed that they were uncertain of what the task for this action phase was, and did not feel that a map of their dream experiences would be helpful, so they did not produce one. Rather, they did some further reading on the literature on lucidity. For related reasons, I also did not produce a drawing of my experiences. These disturbances and lack of motivation was further indication that the collaborative Inquiry was breaking down.

In this final meeting we discussed the nature of dreams that psychotherapy clients tend to report, and focused on two types of dreams: nightmares, some of which repetitive and related to traumatic experiences, and pleasant dreams that were a source of resolution, integration and happiness. Further, Peter distinguished between two types of nightmares linked to trauma, nightmares that represent the traumatic experience itself, and dreams that are a "product of what happened" and point toward positive change and growth. A schematic diagram of the different types of dreams can be found in Figure 3.33. Two dreams of clients and their contexts are shown in Figures 3.34 and 3.35.

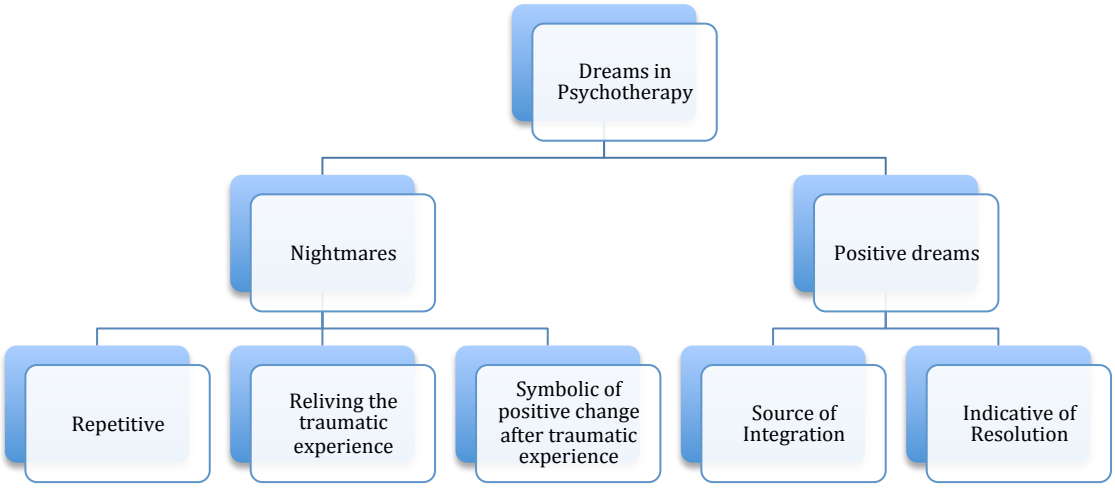


Figure 3.33 *Types of Dreams in Psychotherapy*

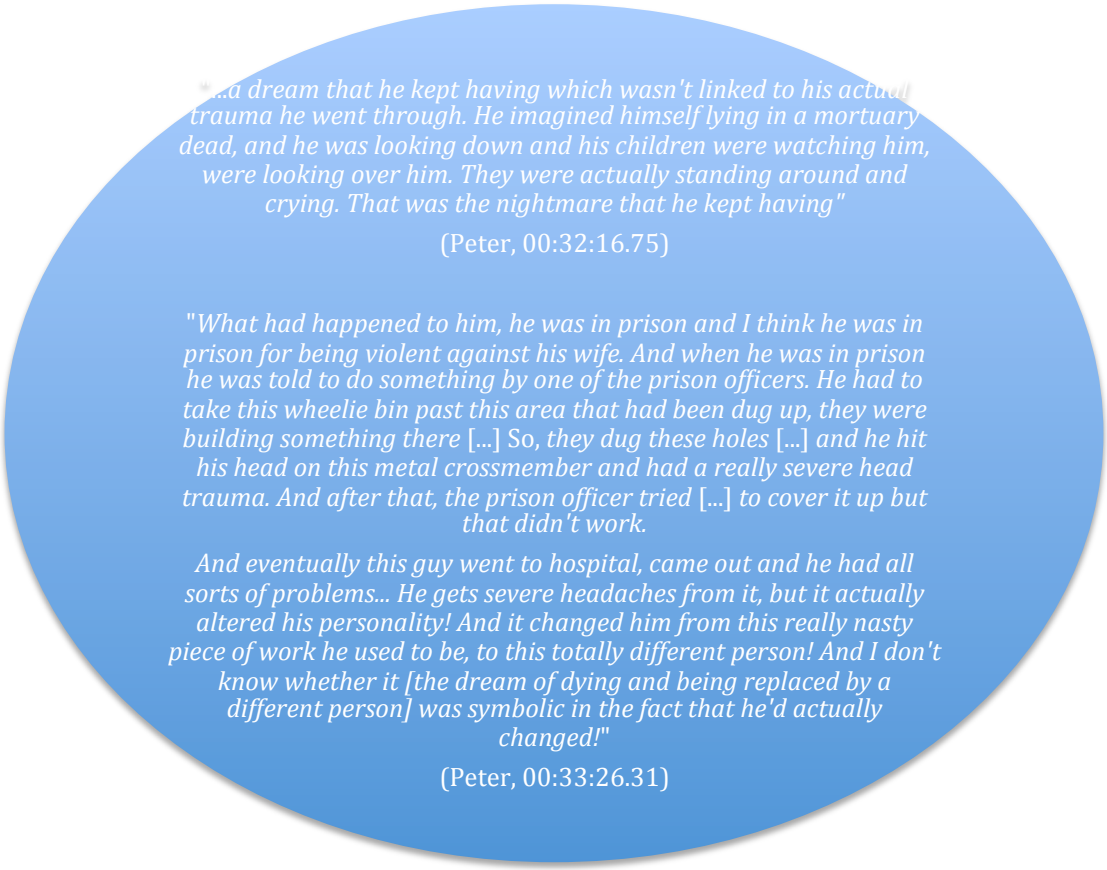


Figure 3.34 *Psychotherapy client's nightmare linked to trauma and symbolic of positive change*

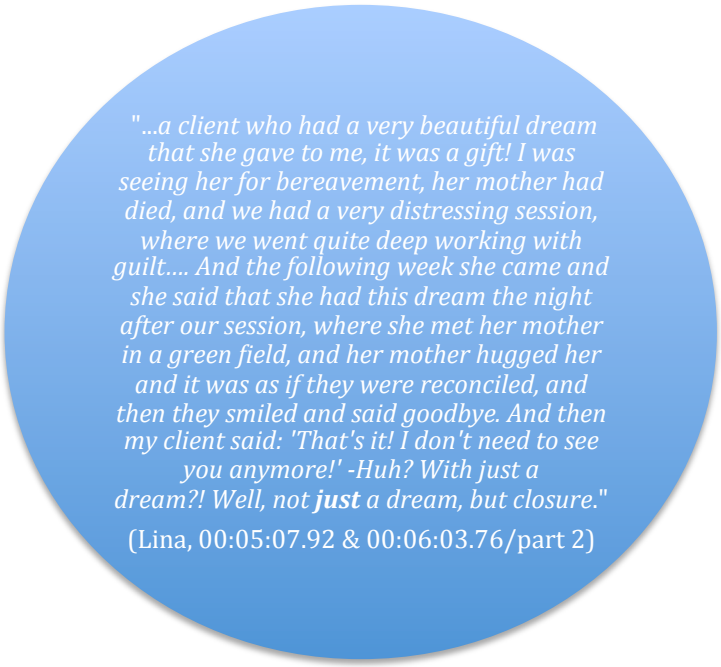


Figure 3.35 *Dream as a source of resolution, integration and positive change in a psychotherapy session*

3.8.2 Further Findings, Divide and Collapse of Collaborative Inquiry

In the weeks preceding this final meeting I was becoming increasingly anxious about the future of the inquiry as I felt that the conditions for an authentic collaboration were rapidly collapsing and the research method was moving away from the research proposal. My anxieties were reflected in three dreams that I shared with the group (Figure 3.36).

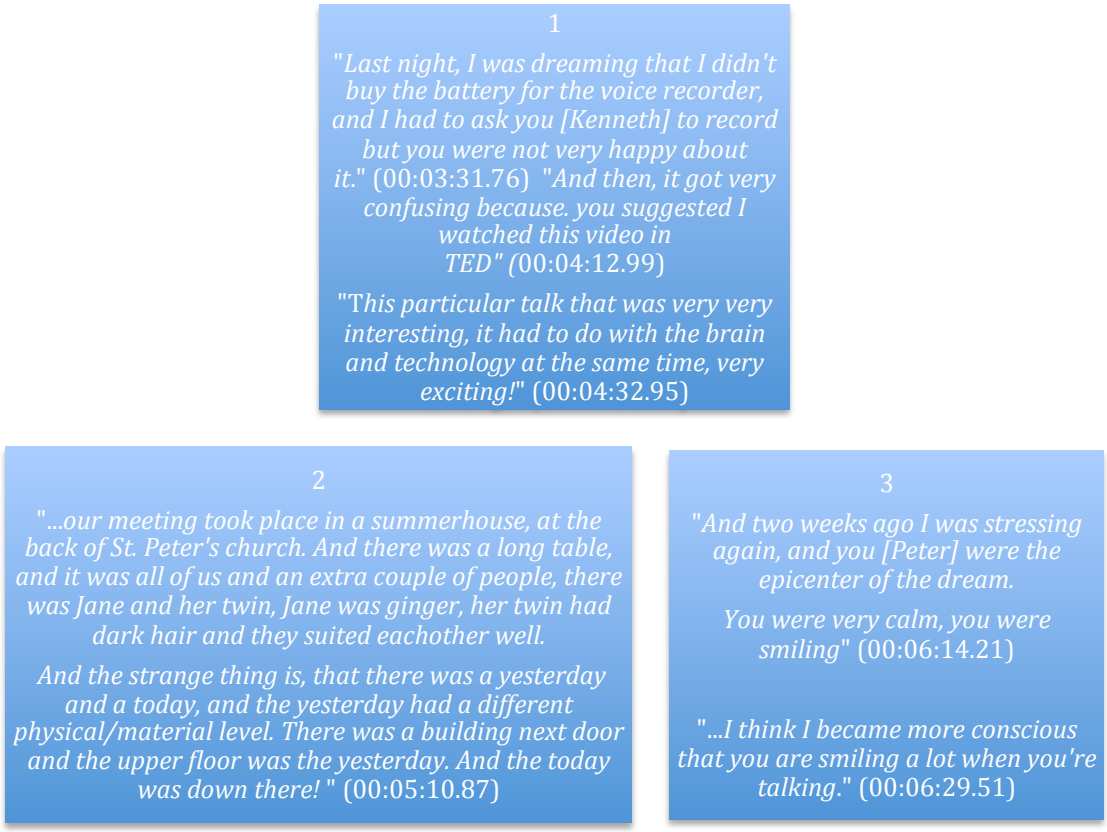


Figure 3.36 *Lina's dreams on the inquiry*

This seventh meeting is recorded in two parts because the battery of the voice recorder did indeed run out, which was –funnily- associated with my dream about not buying a battery (Box 1, Figure 3.36). We recorded the second part of the meeting on Kenneth's mobile phone. In addition, I had left my mobile phone at home that day, and as a result Damon and Lola were not able to communicate with us after they went to the wrong place, and so they did not join us for the meeting. I believe that all these "difficulties", the obstacles and breakdown in communication, reflected the state of the Inquiry at the point of this final meeting.

Discussing my dreams in relation to the Inquiry opened the way for Kenneth and Samuel to express their views and feelings. Specifically, Kenneth's objections to the inquiry crystallised in two main points. Firstly, Kenneth strongly objected to the exploration of

lucid dreaming. He stated that he has read on lucid dreaming and has concluded through rational processes that one can never be certain that one is aware of dreaming (Box 1, Figure 3.37).

Secondly, Kenneth felt that there was no research method and was worried that, as a result, our findings would not be useful. He thought that we were wandering aimlessly, felt lost without an "end goal", and suggested that our meetings should focus on the research method instead of focusing on dreams (Box 2, Figure 3.37).

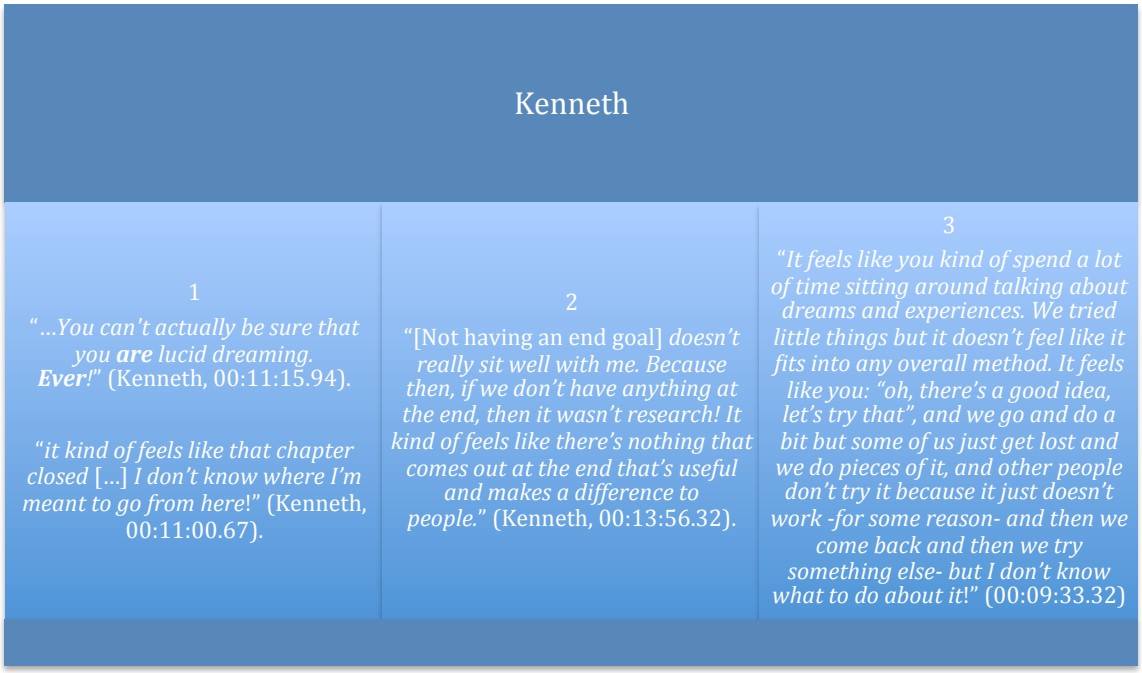


Figure 3.37 *Kenneth's objections to the inquiry*

I did not share Kenneth's need for clear direction, an end goal and "tangible" results. Rather, I felt that the inquiry, just like waking life and dreaming, was about the journey and not about the destination (Box 1, Figure 3.38). Along similar lines, Peter felt that our exploration of dreaming was about the journey itself (Box 2, Figure 3.38).

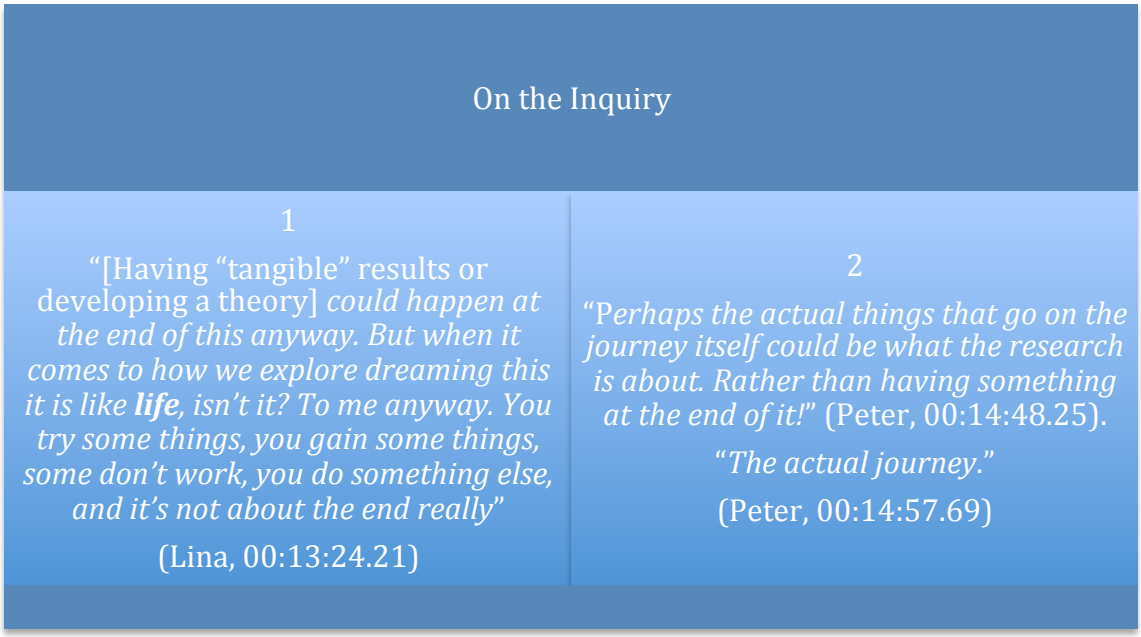


Figure 3.38 *Lina's and Peter's view of the Inquiry*

Samuel shared Kenneth's reservations, and further questioned my choice of dreaming as a research topic. He rationalised that academic courses in Psychology did not include dream studies with the exception of Freud's theory, and that this seemed to him to be "*a good theory to tell you the truth!*" (Samuel, 00:30:13.35), suggesting that the lack of dream research in Psychology was perhaps justified.

Samuel stated that he has read the research on lucid dreaming, and further reasoned that one cannot be certain whether they are (lucid) dreaming, and so the phenomenon is impossible to investigate: "*It's kind of a default position!*" (Samuel, 00:07:43.09/ part 2), This "default position" proposition found Kenneth in agreement.

In support of his argument and to my wonder, Samuel disclosed that while practising the techniques to trigger lucid dreaming, he had a dream "akin to what people call lucid dreaming" and which he dismissed as being a normal dream. His argument is illustrated in Figure 3.39.

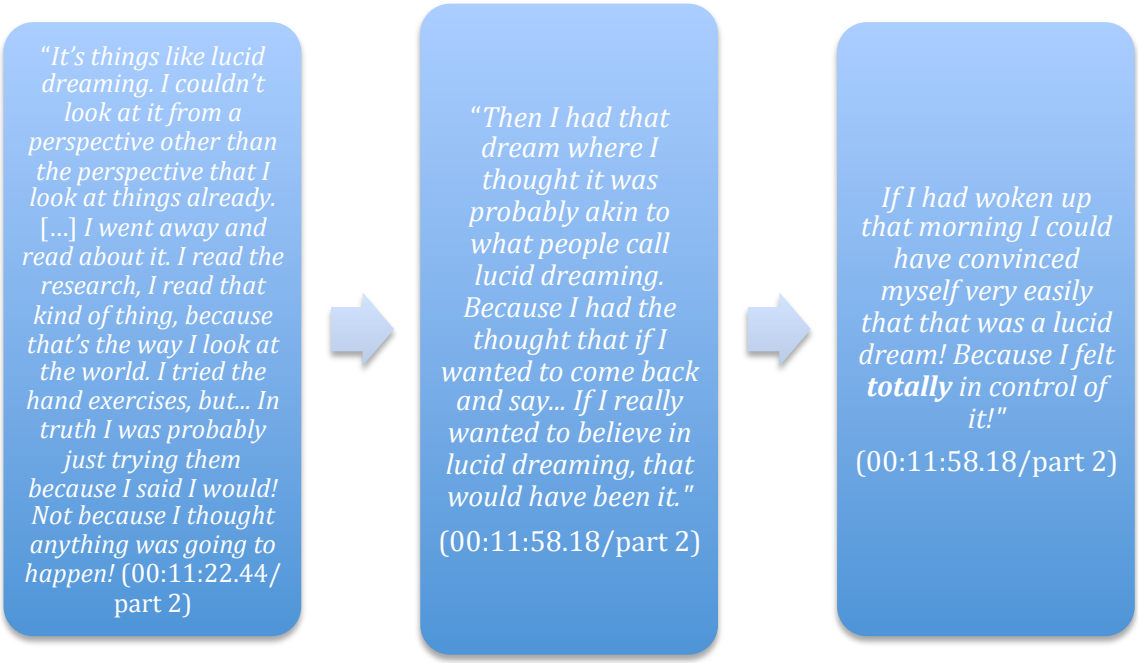


Figure 3.39 *Samuel on lucid dreaming*

Further, Samuel argued that the nature of the inquiry as it developed did not fit his "frame of reference". Specifically, for Samuel dreams were not "poetic", but they facilitated the processing of information (Box 1, Figure 3.40).

Expanding, Samuel felt that psychotherapy clients are people who are in distress, therefore dream and imagery/rewind techniques "*this 'psych stuff' is going to be about correcting negative things*" (Samuel, 00:04:00.57/part 2). Samuel's objections were therefore crystallized against the "poetic" line of the inquiry, the view that dreams were meaningful and positive experiences, and he rejected the group's propositions and actions as fruitless attempts to create meaning (Boxes 1 & 2, Figure 3.40).

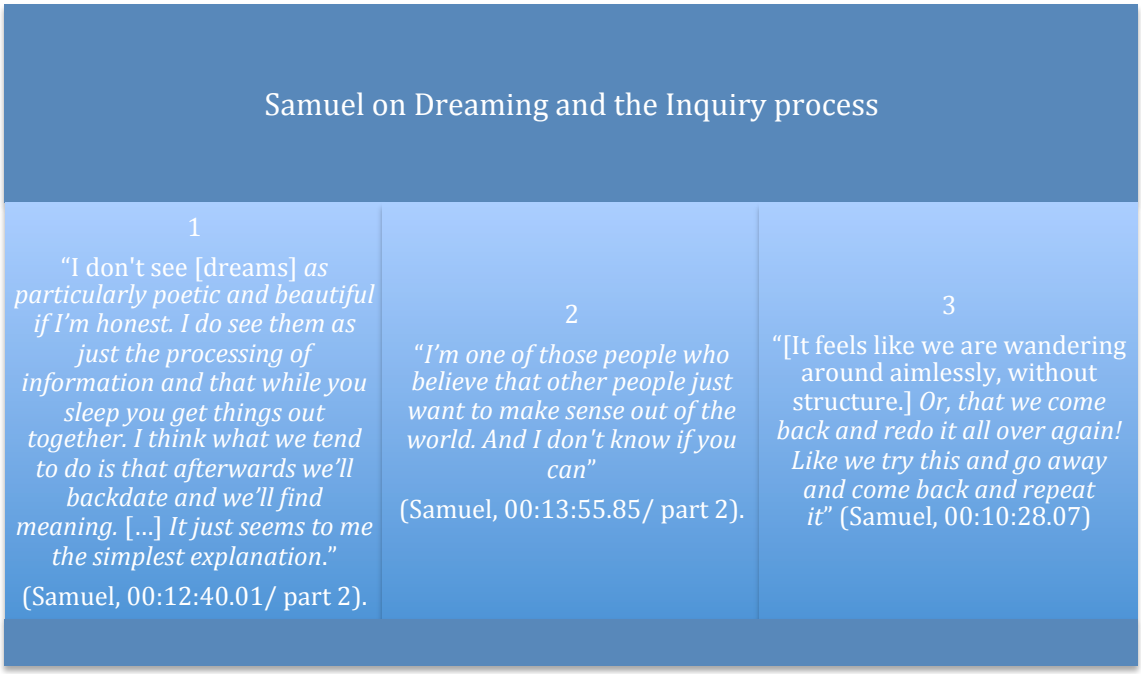


Figure 3.40 *Samuel's views on dreaming and the inquiry*

On the other hand, I believed that our human existence is about meaning, and argued on the validity of our subjective experiences:

"*Perhaps we'll never know for certain if the meaning was there or created... but does this make any difference? Should we allow this to take away from the experience?*" (Lina, 00:14:14.32/ part 2).

I was concerned with Kenneth and Samuel's "default position" of rejecting lucidity as paradoxical: by stating that it is impossible to know whether one is aware or not "*you then completely disregard this whole part of experience that people* ***do*** *have*" (Lina, 00:07:24.25/ part 2). As a result, life and all its endeavours, including psychological research, become invalid and meaningless. The following dialogue between Samuel and myself signalled the end of the meeting and our collaboration:

- "*Our whole existence is about meaning. It wouldn't make much sense to go on living if there wasn't any. And psychology is about meaning too, isn't it*? *Because when we start thinking everything is about random*..." (Lina, 00:14:41.82/ part 2).

-"*People don't deal with random*" (Samuel, 00:15:17.03/ part 2).

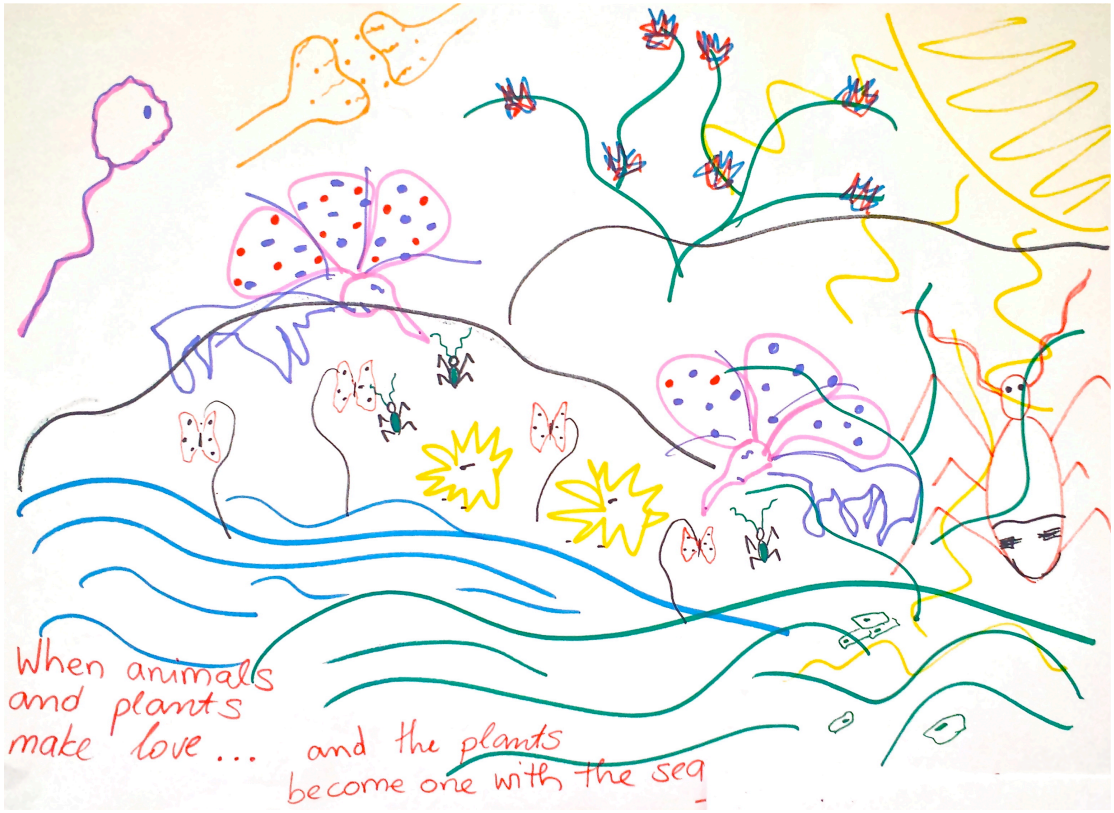
-"*No*" (Lina, 00:15:19.42/ part 2).

3.8.3 Follow-up meeting with Lola and Damon

3.8.4 Outcomes

Following the end of the seventh meeting, I met with Lola and Damon to review and discuss the closure of the action phases of the Inquiry. They both voiced concerns echoing my own views in relation to the dangers of invalidating human experience. Lola and Damon were worried and, indeed, felt strongly against the adoption of a "materialist" position that a priory rejects subjective experiences.

Betty, Damon and Lola's personal "mind maps" can be found in Drawings 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 respectively. Each one reflects their personal journey through the Inquiry. I will not attempt to write in analytic mode on the meaning of their drawings, rather, I will let them speak for themselves.



Drawing 3.2 *Betty's mind map*

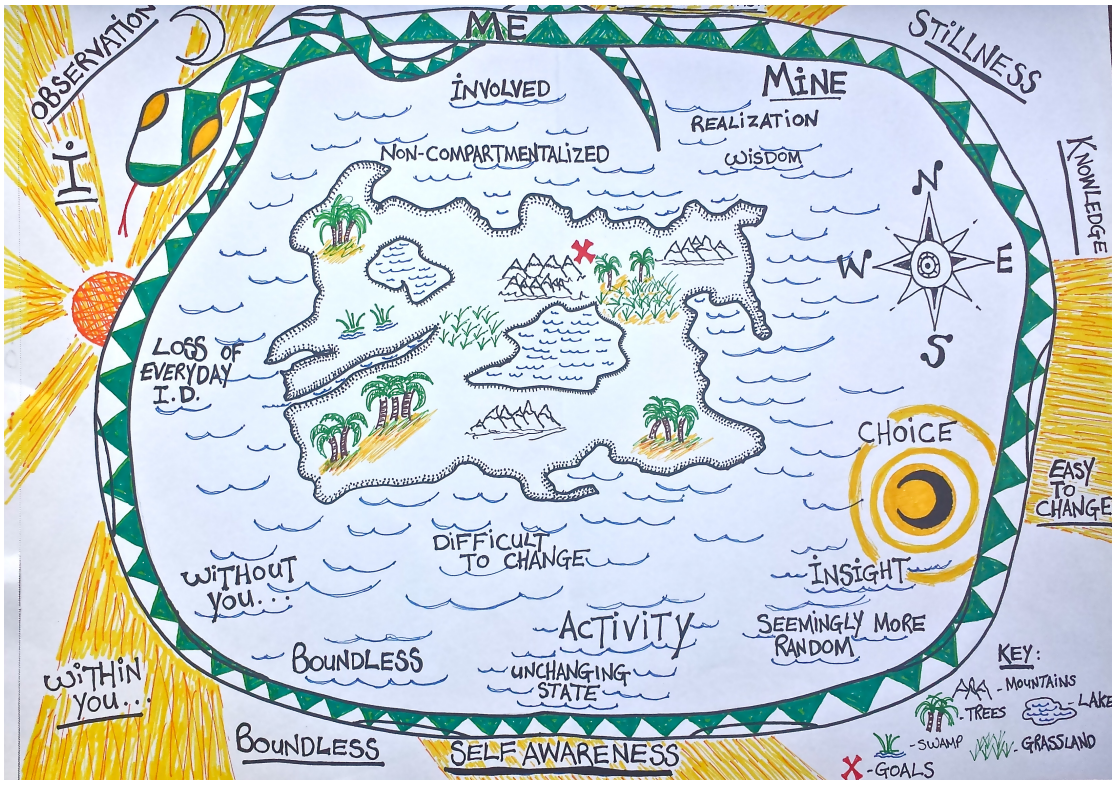


Figure 3.3 *Damon's mind map*

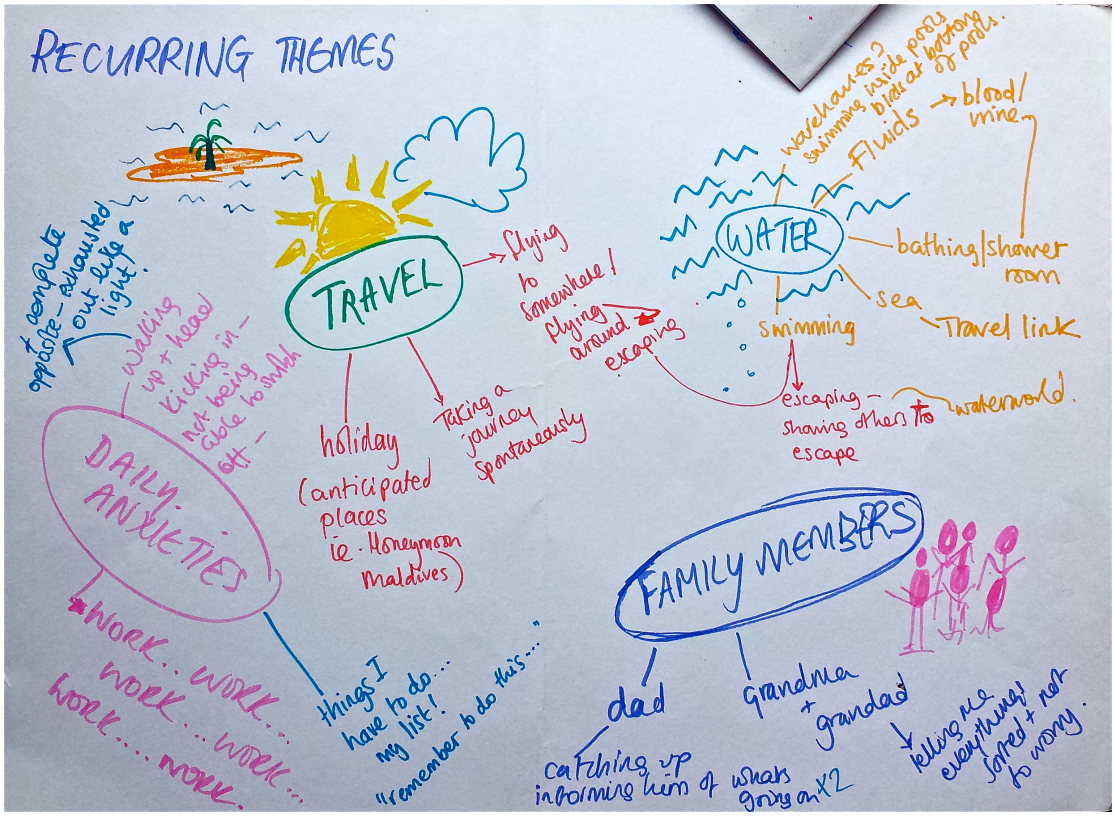


Figure 3.4 *Lola's mind map*

4.9 Conclusion

To conclude the reflection phases, I would like to use Samuel's words in the final meeting:

"*I think it's quite interesting the way this has gone. It probably reflects what you were saying about how it's been looked at before. That sort of divergence of opinion and no real* ***total*** *agreement on the way to look at it, or even the kind of approach to look at it from*" (Samuel, 00:10:35.77 & 00:10:59.04/ part 2).

Chapter 4: Discussion

In this chapter I am discussing our most important findings, relating them to existing findings and theories in the field. In the process I consider methodological limitations, and recommendations for future research and clinical practice in counselling psychology. I endeavour to give an overall account of our inquiry and to integrate the conflicting aspects into a coherent whole.

Our inquiry was rich despite all the differences and obstacles, or perhaps exactly because of them. Some of these differences were complementary, while others were disagreements that led to conflicts. Heron argues that an inquiry can "*celebrate incompatible as well as compatible diversity in the unity*" (1996; p.88), and this is perhaps the strongest indication of the validity of our findings. So, our intersubjective agreement contains the paradoxical element of the relevance of our disagreement.

4.1 Reflections on methodology

4.1.1 Considerations on limitations and validity

Replication of our findings is impossible, since another group would take different actions and reflect on its own unique way. Further, the present written report is severely limited by my own subjectivity. It is valuable inasmuch as it reflects our journey through my lenses. In addition, I was given implicit or explicit agreement by the co-inquirers to go forward with the present narrative.

Further, the validity strategies we employed are discussed in chapter 2.3 of the methodology section, and were also collaboratively considered throughout our inquiry. Heron's devil's advocate procedure took a new form in our inquiry: two subgroups were

naturally formed, and so we avoided consensus collusion. This served to test and validate our experiences, but at the same time we were left feeling that our inquiry did not flow or grow the way we were hoping it would.

Whether or not the truth that this report speaks resonates with the reader, depends, I feel, on whether they feel they learned something.

4.1.2 Authentic collaboration

Co-operative inquiry is by no means an easy process. It asks from the researcher more than any form of traditional research. But it also gives more.

Being personally involved in the subject matter and embracing the philosophy behind co-operative inquiry has proven to be a challenge: it posed questions of ownership of the project and set the stage for tension and power imbalances between myself and co-inquirers.

Authentic collaboration is a significant issue in all non-positivist research (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994). In our explorations, we were faced with an unavoidable challenge since our study was initiated "externally": I had my own needs and objectives, which did not fully coincide with those of the rest of the group. What I am learning is that authentic collaboration does not imply full equality, rather each member brings experience and skills to the group, and is willing to share and develop them collectively. Indeed, there were a number of indicators of our successful collaboration and these are shown on Table 4.1.

Indicators of succesful collaboration
•Our inquiry was *full-form co-operative* (Heron, 1996): Our participation was both political and epistemic: everyone alternated between the roles of co-researcher and co-subject, between making sense of the data and generating it. As a result, we broke down the separation between researcher and subject.
•Other co-inquirers led discussions, while there were times that we opted for no specified facilitator's role
•Co-inquirers initiated discussions on project issues in my absence
•Original assumptions, plans and hopes I had for the inquiry were challenged and abandoned in light of the reality we were co-creating
•Everyone had the chance to comment on all aspects of the inquiry, hopefully without fear of upsetting me or annoying me

Table 4.1 *Indicators of successful collaboration*

Despite these indications of our authentic collaboration, I had to accept that some level of power imbalance was inevitable. For example, having the responsibility of recording our meetings and receiving research supervision, created a perception amongst the group that I was in control of the research. In addition, individual members were occasionally looking for outside guidance and the setting of goals.

These limitations were discussed at length during our reflection stages, and cannot solely be attributed to methodological challenges, my inexperience in managing group dynamics, or the sporadic member attendance in meetings. They also point towards the inevitable responsibility of every one of us for the choices we make, and the angst these choices create in us. Freedom and responsibility are inseparable, and as Sartre (1948) puts it, we are indeed condemned to freedom. In direct parallel to our inquiry and our role as co-researchers, therapy itself is a dialectical procedure: both therapist and client

have to accept full responsibility for themselves and their contributions in the relationship.

4.2 Outcomes

4.2.1 Continuity between waking and dreaming consciousness and insights

In direct parallel with Heidegger's Dasein (2010), our inquiry was an area of openness toward the phenomena we encountered. Dreams, being an integral part of our experience, disclosed themselves naturally. In this respect, the inquiry broke free from the dualistic nature of the majority of previous research, which is founded on the Cartesian assumption that there is an unbridgeable chasm between the human mind and measurable matter. Instead, our inquiry created the openings and shed light to our being-in-the-world and the obstacles in our path.

Our experience of the self within our dreams was constant although the "quality" of it varied[10]. This rendered our dreams deeply personal. Cognitively, we seemed to have some access to memories of waking life, and choice, volition and intent seemed to occur in our dreams, but these occurrences were limited[11]. This is not unlike Revonsuo's (2005) argument that the dream self has some limited access to autobiographical memory, and Kahan & LaBerge (1996) findings that deliberation and volition are evident in dreams.

However, and unlike previous research, our inquiry constituted a relational space that allowed us to break away from the constrictions of the dichotomy between waking and

[10] For a more detailed discussion see "*The Self and Time in our dreams*" in the second stage of our inquiry and *"The Self in our dreams"* in the fifth stage.

[11] See for example Kenneth's "John Cleese" dream in Box 1, Fig. 3.3, or Betty's "lemon drizzle cake" dream, 00:35:12.50, fifth stage.

sleeping states. Since our findings existed in relation to those of other members and our dream world, our experiences of dreams were as real as any event in our waking lives. As Betty declared: "*The Self, the experience of the Self that happens in the dream, is actually more* ***real****, than what the 'true' Self actually is.* […] *Life is what happens in the instant,* ***now****, time isn't linear!"* (Fifth reflection phase, 00:19:31.11).

Thus, our findings exemplify the existential viewpoint that "our experiences in dreams are as real as anything we experience in waking life" (Young, 2005, p. 209). As M. Boss (1963) argued, we do not have dreams, dreaming is not something that happens to us, rather "*we are our dreaming state*" (1963, p. 261).

That dreaming is an integral part of our experience was asserted by Damon's experience of his dreaming as lucid, which he attributed to living life "mindfully" (Table 4.2). There have been claims that meditation, which involves high levels of attention, volition and reflection, may be associated with self-awareness in dreams (Schredl & Erlacher, 2004). Damon's experience of dreaming mindfully is in accordance with Boss's (1963) theory that the waking and dreaming worlds are interrelated and connected by the individual and their experience in life: The dreamer expresses a particular "mode of being"' and this is just as valid of who they are as any account of a waking event.

In addition, we extensively associated dream elements with waking life experiences throughout our inquiry. This is further indication that dreams are personal, and is consistent with findings of previous research (Blagrove et al., 2011; Bulkeley & Domhoff, 2010). Dreams are so in a unique position to show to us what really matters.

The fact that the association between dreaming and waking life was evident, point towards the view that all our concerns, whether dreaming or waking, refer to the fundamental issues of our being-in-the world (Boss, 1963; Jaenicke, 1996).

Damon's experience with lucidity and meditation	
"… personally I'm always conscious during my dreams, I always know I'm dreaming, that comes through practicing certain things" (00:04:50.17, Stage 1)	*"…How I live and do stuff all the time, when I walk I am meditating, when I read I'm actually approaching it like I'm martial arts' training. A lot of my education was about how to approach everyday menial tasks. Just like the essence of Zen Buddhism is 'What do you do when you're eating your breakfast? When you're washing your clothes?"* (00:32:11.84, Stage Four).

Table 4.2 *Lucidity and meditation*

Further, we made a distinction between trivial and bizarre dreams, with trivial dreams being readily associated with events, cognitions and emotions of waking life. Table 4.3 illustrates our association of our waking and dream experiences and the distinction of trivial and bizarre dreams.

Dream and waking continuation and distinction of bizarre dreams		
"I was trying to solve problems, so this came into my dreams. I can go to bed and think, ok, I need to call this person and I need to do this thing, and then that would evolve into a dream. They were very stressful dreams. […] *So, yes, for me, there is a strong link between what's happening in my life and what I would dream. And vice versa, like I would wake up after dreaming all these lovely dreams… in a better mood."* (Lina, 00:11:00.03, second stage).	*"I had a lot of these kind of dreams where you're sorting out your diary in your head, that kind of thing. Where you've got your day and the events in your day seem to play through. I had a couple of stranger dreams as well… which didn't make an awful lot of sense."* (00:13:23.29, second stage).	*"I sometimes wake up with tunes in my head and sometimes they are there all day. And sometimes it's like: "Why is this in my head?" Because it's always something really cheesy. But then I can get about my day, and then… walking home again and it's just the same song, the music."* (Peter, 00:00:57.46; second stage)

Table 4.3 *Dream and waking consciousness continuity and bizarre dreams*

Freud's term "day-residue" refers to this frequent incorporation of happenings from the previous day into dreams and this relationship is documented in Kramer (2007). Bizarreness however has been found to occur less frequently, in about 10% of dreams (Straus & Meier, 1996). It was these bizarre, odd and surprising elements of dreams that grasped our imagination and curiosity, these dreams that seemed to "come out of nowhere"[12].

Occasionally, we associated vivid dreams and more control over dreams with playing video games and poor quality sleep[13]. On these occasions, the boundaries between reality and dreaming blurred. J. Gackenbach has investigated the effects of playing video games on consciousness and dreaming in a series of studies, and also found that gamers experience more bizarre dreams and were more likely to report lucid dreams, or dreams

[12] Kenneth, 00:30:23.72, Fifth stage.

[13] *Kenneth* 00:26:44.95, first stage)*; Betty (*00:28:10.14, first stage).

in which they had more control (see for example Gackenbach, 2006; Gackenbach et al., 2009).

Hobson (1999) founded his theory that dream content is delirium-like, not motivated and meaningful, on this bizarreness. However, there were instances throughout our inquiry where we were able to see past the immediate images of a bizarre dream, and consequently we were able to relate it to our psychological state[14]. This link between dream content and waking emotions and cognitions was occasionally achieved through further reflection and discussion[15]. As a result, we considered these dreams to be a source of insight, problem resolution, and the transcending of dilemmas, consistent with theories that claim that dreams can be used therapeutically (Boss, 1963; Cushway & Sewell, 2013; Freud, 1976; Jung, 1995; Perls; 1971). These problems and dilemmas were encountered both in waking life and within dreams themselves[16].

These findings can be viewed as an illustration of Boss's Daseinanalytic theory (1963): the relationships we have in our dreams are as real as those in our waking lives, and the one can throw light on the other. In contrast to Psychoanalysis, we were able to discover these parallels between dream elements and other aspects of our lives not by means of complex analysis and interpretation, but by carefully observing the elements of a dream. As Husserl would argue, we have to return to the things themselves: This is where our Being-in-the-world comes to light (1970).

---

14 "*I had a lot of fantasies, and I carried those fantasies in my dreams too… although fantasies are not real, they made my life easier and things a bit more balanced, so, not everything was going downhill, I found this escape route*." (Lina, 00:11:00.03)

15 For example, Peter's recurring "messy" dream in Fig. 3.8 stopped after his dream of "clearing out" (Box 2, Fig. 3.14) and his subsequent exclamation: "*Well, yeah, it could be! It could be a resolution!*" (Peter, 00:28:03.31, third stage)

16 Phil found a dream solution (Box 2, Fig 3.12) to a problem he encountered in a dream (Box 2, Fig. 3.9). It would be interesting to see whether he associated this dream with waking life, and whether the dream theme progressed.

However, not all our experiences were the same, and our insights seemed to depend on the extent of our belief in whether dreams carry meaningful messages, and on the extent to which we considered them to be pleasant and worthy of investigation. To illustrate the point, the differing experiences of Peter and Samuel are shown in Figure 4.1. While Peter gained a number of insights by exploring his dreams, Samuel was perhaps the only co-inquirer not to report any insights through dreams.

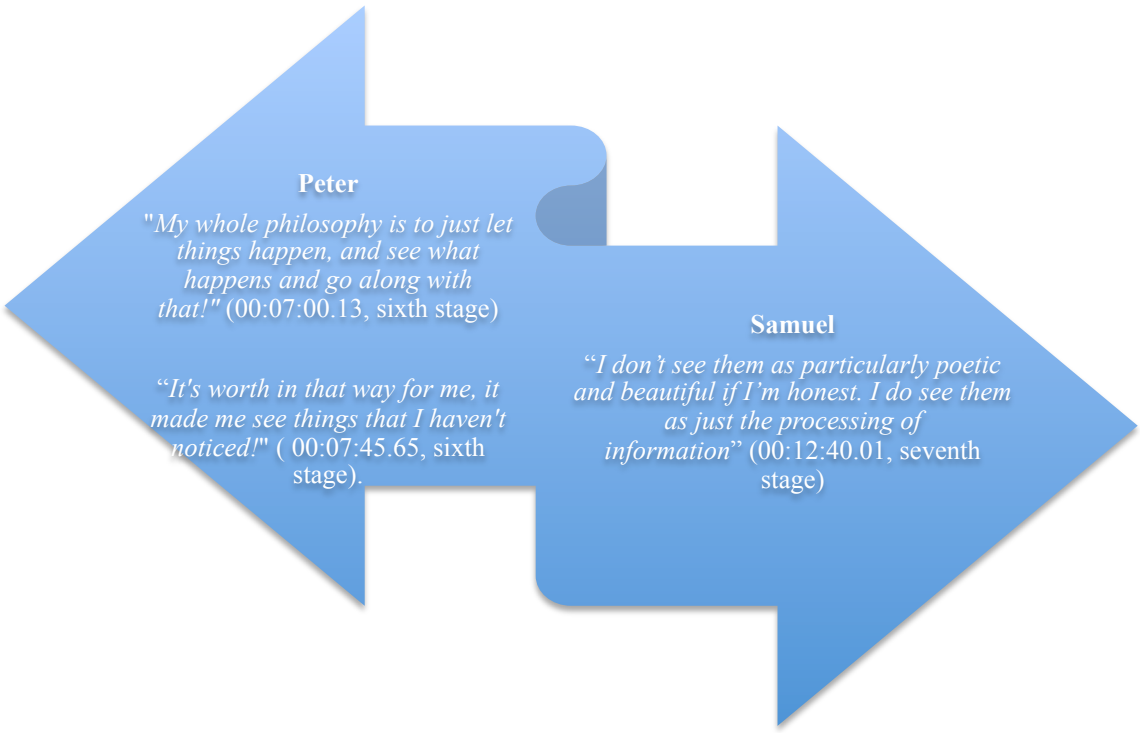


Figure 4.1 *Differing attitudes towards dreams*

This is consistent with the findings of Hill et al. (2001) that one's own positive attitude to dreams contributes to insight gains and better therapy outcomes. That insights gained are dependent on whether we adopt a positive attitude towards dreams or not, suggests that the important factor is our intention. In the end, we only see what we want to see. Or, to state it differently, if our human existence is an assembly of possibilities of perceiving

and relating to the world (Heidegger, 2010), then the act of discovering ourselves and our world though the inquiry brought forth all the possibilities and restrictions we see in it. When considering our dreams we were lead to discover parallels with other aspects of our lives.

Therefore, it is possible that a certain level of openness or reflection on the dream content is necessary to transcend waking life anxieties. Accordingly, Hill (2003) claimed that dreams could be a form of therapy when a cognitive method is employed when awake in order to incorporate the insight. However, our findings indicate that some dreams were "significant", and further reflection was not always necessary: the images of the dream alone were meaningful and sufficient for transformation[17]. Similarly, Jung (1978) and Perls (1969; 1971) asserted that dreams hold the key to what we need to develop our full potential, while Boss (1963; 1994), in direct parallel with our findings, argued that dreams yield their meanings of themselves and produce illuminating therapeutic effects for the dreamer. In this vein, the reality of the dream should not be downgraded in favour of waking reality.

Consistent with research conducted by Edwards et al. (2013) there seemed to be two types of insight that we experienced: one was associated with discovering a waking life source for our dream[18], and the other was associated with the experience of transcending or understanding a problem[19]. Thus, this latter form of insight illuminates the possibilities for a more authentic mode of being.

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[17] See for example Kenneth's transcending of a dilemma (00:57:06.85, second stage three), Lina's "escape route" (00:11:00.03, second stage), or Lola's meeting with her estranged father (Box 3, Fig. 3.15).
[18] For example, Peter's "aha!" moment (00:18:26.16, seventh stage) when he related Gimly the Dwarf with his colleague, Jonathan Beaver, and so connected his dream of "St. John's House" with the film Lord of the Rings he was watching the previous night (Peter, 00:18:26.16 in stage seven & Fig. 3.40).
[19] Betty's "aha!" moment when she dreamt answering a work-related phone call, and realised upon waking that she needs to "stop thinking about work" (Box 3, Fig. 3.11).

In conclusion, our findings indicate that there are strong links between waking awareness and dreaming, and our dreams were a source of insight and overcoming waking life problems. As Revonsuo suggested "*the radical proposal now is that dreaming ought to be championed as an example of conscious experience, a mascot for scientific investigation in consciousness studies*" (2006, p. 86).

4.2.2 Intentionality

One of our most significant findings was that intention alone to remember our dreams had a positive effect on the quantity of remembered dreams, their quality and content (Table 4.4). Intentionality came out in dreams themselves: for example, going back to sleep and picking up the dream from where it was left[20], and making choices that are beneficial within a dream, and subsequently informed our waking attitudes[21]. As discussed above, intention also seemed to be the deciding factor in obtaining insights.

We also found that intentional transformation, both on a behavioural and on a perceptive level, started when individuals were contemplating their membership and before the official start of our inquiry (see for example Damon's experience in Box 2, Fig. 4.4).

[20] "*But then the weirdest bit is that when I start to wake up, and I think, actually that* [dream] *was very cool, I want to finish that and then go back! And resume!*" (*Kenneth* 00:26:44.95, first stage).

[21] Again, Kenneth's transcending of a dilemma (00:57:06.85, second stage three).

Impact of intending to remember		
1 *"I did make a conscious effort to think to myself, I need to remember my dreams in the morning. And, to be fair, I did start to remember a lot more than I would usually."* (Betty, 00:16:28.37, second stage)	2 *"...since you mentioned that we were going to be doing this, I found **just** the intention of wanting to remember [...] I've actively been remembering [...] a lot of things that I've been dreaming, and so, I think the intention can be enough, or it has been for me anyway..."* (Damon, 00:02:50.04, first stage).	3 *"…what I noticed more is that, before when I was saying that I didn't dream, I just hadn't paid any attention to my dreams, cause I noticed that by scribbling down on a piece of paper close to my bed… there is often a couple of seconds and then you're sort of awake and you find whatever it was that you were doing."* (Samuel, 00:13:23.29, second stage)

Table 4.4 *The intention to remember dreams*

In phenomenological terms, the central structure of an experience is indeed its intentionality, its being directed toward something. Rollo May (1969/2007) defined intentionality as "*the structure which gives meaning to experience*" (p.223), the bridge between subjective and objective reality. So, and assuming that psychotherapy is concerned with changing meaning and the ways we direct our awareness, intentionality becomes a key concept in Counselling Psychology (for a more detailed discussion on the positioning of intentionality see Appendix 12).

4.3 Contributions to Counselling Psychology and practice recommendations

Dream work is currently limited to psychoanalytic approaches. Recently, CBT models were developed that focus on working with nightmares associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. These approaches adopt a Cartesian view of the world as separated

between mind and matter, where waking consciousness is different to dreaming consciousness.

In contrast, our findings indicate that there is a continuation of consciousness between waking and dreaming life, with our personal experiences in waking life and our level of intention being important aspects of dreaming. While dreaming, we are dealing with matters referring to our essential current concerns. Our findings also suggest that dreams have an important role to play in overcoming problems and angst, gaining insights, and providing entertainment.

Thus, our inquiry points towards adopting of a phenomenological view of the dreaming world, as exemplified in Heidegger's philosophy (2010) and Boss's Daseinanalysis: subjective experience, choice and responsibility are central to our theory and practice as counselling psychologists. When treating people dreams can be used therapeutically and creatively, with the aim of personal development, growth and authenticity. In addition, our inquiry suggests that some dreams hold therapeutic power in themselves, and in the absence of further consideration. This implies that it may be therapeutically viable to bring clients' attention to their dreaming, always being mindful of the different attitudes people may have. Merely opening the way for the discussion of dreams may be sufficient for meaningful insights to be obtained.

Further, the reality of a dream should not be downgraded in favour of waking reality. Dreaming and waking states are analogous, and issues we are concerned with while dreaming demand a resolution in order for growth to occur, just like they do in waking life. Boss (1994) argued that, with procedures that are respectful to dream phenomena, dreams could yield their meanings and so have a therapeutic effect for the dreamer. Our

findings indicate that dreams hold the key to tracing a person's subjective position in the world, their intentions, concerns, and possibilities.

So, the first step in clinical practice should be to create the space in order to explore as fully as possible any dream that is volunteered, and to assist the client to distil the central meaning. As practitioners, we should avoid interpreting or suggesting what an image stands for, and be aware that a dream can be given several different meanings. As van Deurzen (2002) argues, the client is the ultimate authority of how she wants to perceive her own reality.

Viewing dream images as metaphors and tracking down their basic message in this way can reveal the client's basic existential position, their way of being-in-the-world. Since waking and dreaming world are inter-related, everything that happens in a dream should be considered in the same way that a waking event would, and looked at phenomenologically for the meaning it contains. Paying close attention to the overall mood, allows space for the dreamer to begin the process of discovering the possibilities and obstacles in their world.

Condrau (1993) described the procedures that Boss employed to explore dreams, and these are similar to how we approached dreams in our inquiry, and to how counselling psychologists explore any waking phenomenon: staying with the dreamer, their experience, and the overall mood of the dream, while asking questions in order to gain a full picture of the context and the mood. The central question to be addressed is "Which fundamental aspect of human existence is the dreamer concerned with, and how is she dealing with it?"

The next step involves inviting the dreamer to relate these discoveries to their waking reality, so that an understanding of the dreamer's way of being and overall life stance can be reached. Emerging insights point to the dreamer's existential constraints, as well as her unclaimed possibilities: the dream itself holds the key to a more authentic existence.

Assuming that our goal in therapy is to liberate individuals from unnecessary constraints, the final step would be to act on this insight and find constructive ways to implement it. However, further action in waking or dreaming life is not always necessary. As our inquiry highlighted, once a dream is understood and new insights have been reached, healing can emerge.

It is paramount that training programs acknowledge the importance of the dreaming experience and its potential to be meaningful in the process of self-understanding: exploration of dreams has a place in the curriculum, as dreams may be used to understand ourselves and help others.

In addition, integrating mindfulness practice into counseling psychology training may help to cultivate the capacity for self-observation and develop awareness over the waking/dreaming continuum. It could so promote therapists' own understanding of themselves and their wellbeing.

Finally, what our findings point towards, is that intentionality is a key concept in the understanding of humans and our relationships, one that should have a central role for therapy to be successful.

4.4 Recommendations for future research

A phenomenological approach to research embraces the notion that the researcher is not an impartial agent, and does affect the investigation process and results. The implication of our study is that participants, being intentional agents, begin their transformation at the time they are invited to, or indeed become aware of, a project. As such, the level and nature of their intentionality has to be addressed in any given research project, if we are to claim that we know what it is we are investigating.

In addition, there were a number of propositions in our inquiry that were either "postponed for later", or explored in a limited and fragmented way. These include:

- Whether lucidity has a role to play in understanding and overcoming recurring themes in dreams
- How to facilitate sharing and induce common dream experiences in a group setting

Our study can serve as a launch pad for subsequent overlapping studies with tight criteria for participants: being open to dream work, intending to share and learn, and embracing the methodology. Another interesting area would be to explore therapists' and clients' attitudes to dreams, and how these are reflected in therapy sessions. It seems to me that both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, or a mixed design, would be appropriate for the exploration of these issues.

Part III Critical Appraisal

Chapter 1: Introduction

This section is based on the research diary I kept from the beginning of the process. It's a synopsis of ideas, personal experiences and emotional responses.

1.1 Choice of topic and methodology

The first reflection phase started upon deciding that dreaming is my area of inquiry and continued with the production of the literature review as a piece of work for the University. My decisions were informed by my passion for and commitment to the world of dreams. Personal experience, as well as working in a therapeutic capacity for a number of years, has led me to believe that working with dreams can provide insights and lead to personal growth and healing. The client's dream I describe in Figure 3.35 is one of many wonderful and miraculous experiences I had the privilege to be allowed in and informed my passion for dreams. I am humbled and grateful.

I am also passionate about co-participative inquiry as the research method.

I grew up in Greece, a country that is placed in-between East and West both culturally and geographically. Dreams and divination were an integral part of life for my female ancestors. They were used for making sense and exploring life and as a means of navigating life. As a young child, I remember women, relatives, friends and neighbours, visiting my mother "for coffee". Every morning the house transformed into a social hub; women of all ages embroidered, cooked, gossiped, and shared life problems and dreams. So, from a very early age I was fascinated by dreams, and I learned that dreaming is an integral part of the female experience.

Thus, one of the factors that contributed to my choosing of co-operative inquiry as the research method was my inner drive to recreate that female experience of my childhood memories, that sense of community and connection through the sharing of dreams. Co-operative inquiry is in an advantageous position to achieve this: It pays particular attention to the Self-Other relationship (Rowan, 2000) and it embraces women's movements that bring forth "*a scholarship that emphasises identification, trust, empathy and non-exploitative relationships*" (Punch, 1994, p.89).

So, the form that this study was to take was determined early in the process, with the defining factor fittingly being a dream I had while immersed in the literature on methodology: I dreamt that I was part of a group. It was night on a beach and we were sitting around a fire discussing our dreams. Upon waking I *knew* that the dream was talking to me about the form this research was to take. Finding solutions in dreams is not uncommon, and Barrett (1993) found that it is possible to come up with novel solutions in dreams that are satisfactory to the dreamer. The choice of method was also confirmed later on in the process, when I realised that one of the people I was exchanging emails with regarding dreams, was the co-editor of Human Inquiry (1991), John Rowan. On a personal level, this "meaningful coincidence" was related to and shaped the research design. It is what Jung called "synchronicity", the acausal connecting principle.

Chapter 2: The inquiry

2.1 Initial steps

A lot has happened since my original dream of sharing dreams with a group of people on a beach. Needless to say, I did make inquiries in order to recreate the experience. My investigations revealed that to hold a research project in Greece, ethical approval from a local university is needed. Considering the implications of getting involved with the Greek bureaucratic system, I quickly abandoned this plan.

Submitting the research proposal and gaining ethical approval from the University spurred me on. I began my efforts to recruit a group of fellow inquirers. This was one of the most important and challenging aspects of the project and a very exciting time. I envisaged an environment of warm and loving relationships, where people would grow together and look "over and above". What better way to do this than approach groups I already belonged in: the transpersonal psychology and postgraduate psychology networks, and various groups on facebook. A few people replied with enthusiasm, and this gave me the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with some beautiful people. Unfortunately, geographical restrictions prohibited their taking part.

So, I decided to advertise through my network of friends and acquaintances. I was aware that a few were valuing their dreams and had already shown an interest in the research. The potential problems with group dynamics recruiting in this manner did not escape me at this point, but this, I feel, is a restriction when doing research with strict deadlines and leading to a qualification. In addition, not scrutinising the motivation of potential co-inquirers meant that not all members embraced the dreaming experience or the research process with the same passion and commitment. This was a severe limitation that was to unfold as the project progressed.

2.2 Getting started

It was an exciting time leading to the introductory workshop, not just for me, but also for my co-inquirers. I initially planned to give a small presentation on dreams, going over historical and cultural perspectives (numerous references of dreams in the Bible, dream incubation in ancient Greece, shamanic traditions, aboriginal dreamtime, and so forth), and concluding with significant thought innovations, works of literature and art, and scientific discoveries that their source was dreams: surrealists like Salvador Dalí who were influenced by Freud and based their work directly on dream material, Kubla Kahn who dreamed the design for his stately pleasure dome, Mary Shelley's nightmare, which became Frankenstein, Akira Kurosawa's film "Dreams", Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the list is endless. In the end, I abandoned this plan as I felt that the presentation would point the inquiry towards a certain direction. I suspect that these were my own preconceptions about research: it was proving hard to abandon the assumption that research is objective and the researcher should not affect the research process.

In the early hours of the morning before our introductory workshop I was involved in an experience that was traumatic for all involved. With hindsight I should have cancelled the workshop and postponed the inquiry. I guess I was in shock. Through personal therapy I came to appreciate the extent to which this experience affected the whole of the inquiry, and how I had associated the two. As a result, the whole process, from this initial meeting to the writing up of the report felt difficult, challenging, and full of obstacles.

Practically, dealing with the aftermath of the incident did not allow me the emotional or practical space to proceed with the inquiry as I had originally planned. For example, I

did not produce transcripts and summaries of the meetings soon after they took place. This had a number of consequences. Firstly, I was not able to email co-inquirers before every meeting with a summary of the previous. This would have served to rekindle their memory and get timely feedback. It would also have helped to inform those who had sent their apologies of what was happening.

Had I been able to work more thoroughly on the project as it was evolving, might have resulted in altering our perception that the inquiry was fragmented, did not flow, or it may have saved us going over similar issues in every reflection stage. Secondly, it would have given me the opportunity to consult my research supervisors as the inquiry was progressing, and to have advice and support with what proved to be challenging experience.

2.3 Middle stage

One of the most severe limitations of our inquiry was that no one in the group had experience on, or knowledge of, group dynamics and group facilitation. Again, we might have avoided many of the issues and difficulties we were facing. The little reading I did while in the midst of the process (see for example, Gordon et al., 1972), allowed me to draw parallels with the therapeutic process and the development of the therapeutic relationship. Thus, I was able to draw on my counselling skills. The concept of "disturbances take precedence" informed my opening discussions on the difficulties we were experiencing as a group and individually, having as a starting point my own experience. This was in line with the method's collaborative values.

The challenges that the group faced cannot be underestimated, I feel. Neither were they portrayed in the main body of the report in all their complexity. They included

unspoken tensions, uncomfortable body language, and pregnant silences. This is what happens when to conflicting worlds come in contact. But this is also what can give birth to new insights, novel solutions, and radical developments. I touch upon this on the discussion of "dichotomies and intentionality" in Appendix 13.

2.4 Writing the thesis

2.4.1 Inquiry Process, Outcomes and Discussion

Some length of time elapsed between the completion of the inquiry and the writing of the report. In the meantime, I was making sense of what was happening in my world, integrating experiences, and fighting with (not) writing the report. Fighting with myself I think.

Getting involved with the subject matter again was a challenge. Our group experience was far from what I had initially envisaged. I had to let go of original expectations as I describe them in part 1.1 above, and this was proving difficult. Listening back to our meetings' audio files brought back all the emotions, anxieties, hopes, and fears of the group experience. It also brought back all that was happening in my personal life at the time. And this was a cleansing experience. It allowed me to integrate conflicting aspects into something that is hopefully meaningful not just for the group and myself, but also for the readers.

In the time that had elapsed since the formal end of the inquiry, I made numerous plans on the structure. In the end, I did not use any of them. It felt to me that the report was writing itself. I carefully listened time and time again to the audio files and I tried to follow the happenings step by step and to the best of my abilities. This accounts for the length of the section. I then sent it to co-inquirers for agreement and feedback. However,

I was left with the feeling that to do justice to the method and honour my fellow inquirers more of their involvement was needed in this process.

This was especially relevant when writing the discussion. Following the requirements of the methodology, we were discussing our findings in our meetings, and this discussion was subsequently incorporated in the outcomes part. However, University and journal requirements are informed by the positivist paradigm. As a result, the limited space of the "discussion" part of the report meant that I had to summarise and give some themes prevalence over others. This may account for the "messy" feel, or the impression that some discussion points are of a "meta-level". Finally, a separate discussion section takes away from the collaborative nature of our experience somewhat, and leaves me with the enormous responsibility to do justice to the process and to all who were involved.

2.4.2 Literature review

Updating the literature review also proved to be a challenge, sometimes exhilarating, sometimes frustrating. When I initially wrote the review, the subjective experience of dreaming was only just starting to become part of the scientific agenda. Since then, the developments were rapid, and reach as far as the inclusion and investigation of lucid dreaming. I wonder if these wider developments could have changed the ways and topics we chose to look at. What would happen if we were to do the research now? It seems to me that we cannot get away from the fact that research is confined in our time and space: we do not discover the world, but we create it.

One of the developments that surprised me was Hobson's change of attitude towards dreaming. From his delirium hypothesis he moved towards viewing dreams as

subjective experiences with therapeutic potential, and to the investigation of lucid dreaming. It would seem like the experience of losing his ability to dream and his hallucinatory experiences while awake had informed his newly found faith in the dreaming experience.

Chapter 3: Supervision

One of my biggest regrets and losses in this journey is the limited use of supervision. My personal circumstances did not allow for more fruitful exchanges with my supervisors.

Dr. Yvette Primrose motivated me with her enthusiasm over the research method. We discussed some of the difficulties we were experiencing within the group, and both her and Dr. Nicky Hart kept me on track with the mere statement: "*research is always messy*". This allowed me to continue with the process and challenge myself. What does it feel like when we feel we have no control over a situation?

Dr. Vicky Galbraith has showed an interest. She probably does not know the impact this has had on me. It made me feel that my project is worthwhile and of potential interest to others at a time when I was doubting the whole endeavour.

Finally, Professor Kenneth Manktelow was *there*. I appreciate all his comments and feedback, and I regret that that my poor time management has probably had an impact on him. Early on in the process, and while I was considering different ways of presenting our findings, he commented: "*research only begins with the handing in of a thesis*". That research is an evolving process was a new concept for me. It opened doors

I did not know existed and meant that the present report is not the beginning, or the end of it all.

Therefore, I am considering different ways of approaching the data. For example, in future presentations of our findings dreams and drawings might take precedence: not all "writing" has to follow the Aristotelian paradigm. I am also considering how "bricolaging" and content analysis might shed different light on our inquiry.

Chapter 4: Afterthoughts

4.1 Co-inquirers feedback

One written and four verbal sets of agreement were received. The written feedback belongs to Samuel. My email found him in a retreat "*doing Yoga and boot camps on the beach along with lots of other spiritual things*" (Fig. 5.1).

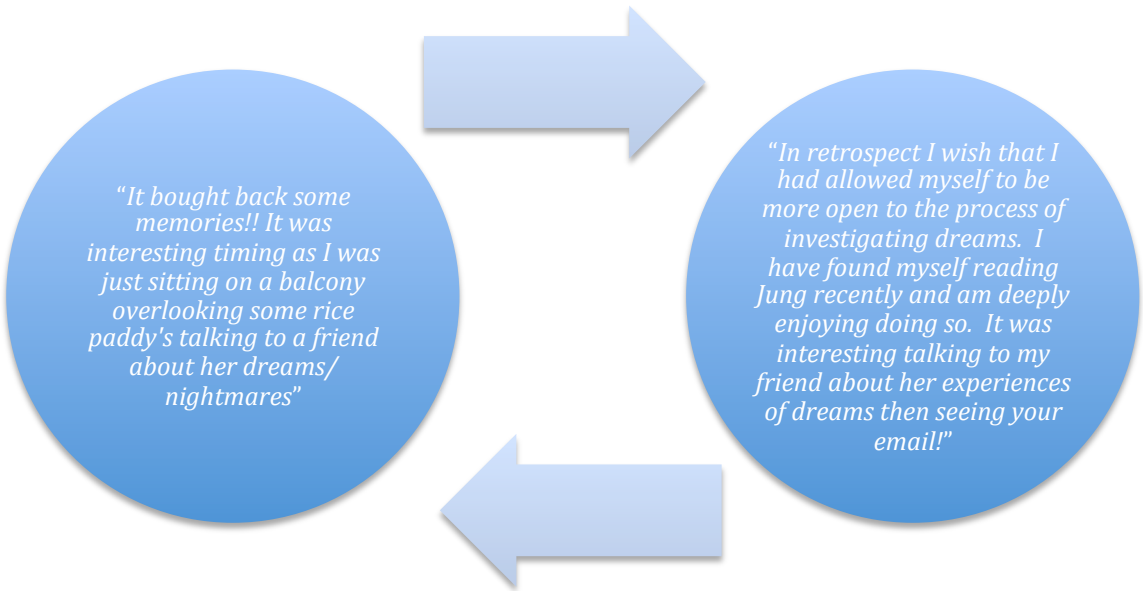

Figure 5.1 *Samuel's feedback (personal communication)*

4.2 Concluding remarks

I feel that every researcher's ultimate goal is to have some positive impact on the world around her. The ways the process has changed my co-inquirers and myself throughout this inquiry are discussed in the outcomes section. In addition, there are some indications that our endeavour's impact reaches beyond our group.

For example, upon telling a colleague that my research is concerned with dreams, they asked about ways to work with nightmares. I was able to discuss with them and direct them to imagery rehearsal therapy (Krakow et al., 2001). As a result, they treated a young person successfully. This, I feel, would not have happened have I not chosen dreams as my research topic. Another example is that some of the co-researchers discussed the collaborative methodology with others who were interested in empowering marginalised aboriginal communities. Although I am not aware of the outcome of this, I get the impression that the "ripple effect" of our endeavour is far reaching.

Finally, I hope that reading this report will have some positive impact on the reader and their world. This may mean leaving you with more questions, or finding renewed respect for your dreaming experiences and the wonder that is our human nature.

Target practice on a shooting range is far from the battlefield; the doctor has to deal with casualties in a genuine war.

He must concern himself with psychic realities, even if he cannot embody them in scientific definitions. That is why no textbook can teach psychology; one learns only by actual experience.

~Carl Jung

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Part IV Appendices

Appendix 1
Notes to contributors

Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice

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Appendix 2
The physiology of sleep and dreams

In 1953 Aserinsky and Kleitman discovered that Rapid Eye Movements (REM) occur under the closed eyelids of sleeping subjects during periods of low voltage, fast EEG activity resembling those of waking subjects. They found that dream recall was more likely if people were woken during REM sleep than from other stages. This was a fascinating time for the dream laboratory, and it was thought that science was at last able to provide answers in relation to dreaming. This excitement led to a series of investigations and a variety of data (see for example Berger & Oswald, 1962), some of which are summarized bellow, using the language of the dream laboratory.

The EEG of a subject during a typical night's sleep was divided into four separate stages (Pinel, 2005). As the subject falls asleep there is a sudden transition from alpha waves to stage 1 sleep EEG (paradoxical sleep) which is similar to, but slower than, the active wakefulness. Then, as the subject continues to sleep, there is a slowing of EEG waves frequency, which is divided into stages 2, 3, and 4. Stage 2 is punctuated by two characteristic wave forms: K complexes and sleep spindles. Stage 3 is defined by the occasional presence of delta waves, the largest and slowest EEG waves. The defining feature of stage 4 sleep EEG is the predominance of delta waves (Pinel, 2005).

After spending some time in stage 4, subjects retreat back through the stages to stage 1, and the night is spent going back and forth through the stages. Each cycle is about 90 minutes long and as the night progresses more time is spent in stage 1 sleep and less time in the other stages. Subsequent periods of stage 1 sleep EEG are accompanied by REMs (Empson, 1993).

REM sleep is characterised by rapid eye movements, low-amplitude, high-frequency EEG and loss of core muscle tone. Other physiological correlates include cerebral activity (blood flow, oxygen consumption and neural firing), increases to near-waking levels, and an increase in autonomous nervous system activity (e.g. respiration, blood pressure, pulse) (Pinel, 2005). The muscles of the extremities occasionally twitch and there is some degree of clitoral or penile erection, which is not indicative of dreams with sexual content (Karacan et al., 1966).

Despite the excitement during the first years of dream laboratory research, REM sleep as the physiological correlate of dreaming has been highly controversial (Ogawa et al., 2002). Subjects woken during REM sleep are indeed more able to recall distinct and vivid dreams. However, dreams are still reported during non-REM sleep, although they seem to be less frequent and less distinct and dramatic, resembling waking thoughts more (Foulkes, 1962).

Other reasons for not for reducing the use of the term "dreams" only to REM mentation include the hallucinatory night terrors of stages 3 and 4 of sleep (Broughton, 1968). In addition, dreams as we normally think of them include both the thoughtlike mentation of non-REM sleep (e.g. the recurring thought of failing an exam) as well as the bizarre and fantastic mentation of REM sleep (Flanagan, 1996). So, for the purposes of this study the definition of dreaming is "any mentation that occurs during sleep" (Webb, 2000; and as advocated by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to nREM Sleep, in Flanagan, 1996).

Appendix 3
The debate between Hobson and Solms on the physiological origins of dreams

According to Hobson (1989) sensory experiences during dreaming are fabricated by the cortex as a means of interpreting chaotic signals from the pons; memories are randomly stimulated by the periodic brainstem activation during REM sleep, and the cortex synthesises these random images into what we understand as dreams. Thus, Hobson's theory proposes that physiological processes cause dreams. However, although a description of the dreaming process may give an account of the brain's activity, it does not necessarily explain the psychological reason for the process (Cushway & Sewell, 2013).

An elaboration of the activation-synthesis model suggests that dreaming may play a role in the learning process; memories are organised and consolidated into a smooth narrative during sleep (Stickgold et al., 2001). There is certainly empirical support that sleep enhances memory, however current research on mice shows that it is nonREM sleep that influences neuronal connectivity after learning (Yang et al., 2014). Another development of Hobson's theory is the suggestion that dreams act as a medium to remove unwanted or unnecessary memories (Crick & Mitcheson, 1983), and so the practice of recalling dreams may be maladaptive.

In contrast to Hobson's theory, research by Solms has found that dreams are generated in the forebrain, and that REM and dreaming are not directly related, as nonREM dreams share many of the characteristics of REM dreams (2000). In addition, Solms' review of over a century of neuropsychological literature shows that the brain areas important for creating dreams are the ventromedial quadrant of the frontal lobe, which is involved with emotional motivation and wishes, and the parieto-temporo-occipital

junction (Solms, 1997). Solms views dreaming as a function of many complex brain structures, and argues that the empirical evidence validates Freud's theory. In addition, he strongly criticizes the field of neuroscience for treating the mind as a mechanical entity and, in the process, ignoring personal experience.

Appendix 4
Psychological dream theories of the century past:
S. Freud, C. Jung, F. Perls

Sigmund Freud

20th century science was dominated by Sigmund Freud's view of dreams as the "Royal Road to the Unconscious", where memories, desires and impulses that are unacceptable to the waking mind are repressed.

Freud's influence is not surprising, since his theories are firmly embedded in our cultural heritage: His views on dreaming were anticipated by more than two thousand years (Plato, c.428-c.347BC; Aristotle, 384-322BC). Aristotle believed that insights were available in dreams that lead to knowledge. In accordance, Plato viewed dreams as the place where a person's bestial desires run riot and equip us to come "nearer to grasping the truth" (Fontana, 2004).

Accordingly, Freud theorised that repressed wishes find gratification during sleep (wish fulfilment), and so dreams are of a bizarre nature and neurotic symptoms in their own right. These wishes, fears and impulses are disguised as symbolic imagery ("latent content"), so that sleep can be protected from awakenings by anxiety (Freud, 1976). Therefore, Freud viewed dreams as functioning both as a guardian of sleep and as a safety valve for unacceptable wishes (Faraday, 1974).

Freud's method for working with dreams in therapy involved "free association" with the aim of arriving at the latent content of dreams. He also believed that certain elements in dreams have common symbolic meaning for people.

Freud's theory that dreams are mental products that can be understood and interpreted was one of the earliest and most influential attempts to explain the content of dreams and to explore their therapeutic potential. Importantly, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1976) introduced the notion that dreaming deserves scientific study and analysis, established the line of questioning that future research was to take, and drew attention to the psychological importance of dreaming (Fontana, 1995).

Carl Jung

For Jung, as for Freud, dreams are deeply symbolic, containing both a manifest and a latent meaning. However, unlike Freud, he saw the unconscious not only as the place for self-preservation and sexual drives, but also for higher motivational drives such as creativity and spirituality. Dreams hold the key not only to what is causing problems, but also to what we most need to do to put them right and to develop our full potential as human beings. For Jung (1995), their bizarre quality is an efficient language, comparable to poetry and capable of revealing an underlying meaning.

Jung believed that although dream symbols are individual creations at an unconscious level, they show a remarkable similarity. This is because human beings inherit not only their physical and mental characteristics, but also a collective unconscious, an innate tendency to organise and interpret experiences in similar ways (Jung, 1978). Symbols are therefore archetypal images and ideas, meaningful for all races and at all times, but rather than being fixed, as Freud argued, they are modified and personified.

Jung's belief that dreams are a normal, creative expression of the unconscious may account for much of the popularity of his views (Cushway & Sewell, 2013). Jung's

theories of dreaming and archetypes lend themselves to modern day theories of Consciousness, not least because of his belief that "*In the living psychic structure, nothing takes place in a merely mechanical fashion; everything fits into the economy of the whole, relates to the whole.*" (Jung, 1995, p.274). His theories are constantly reviewed in the light of developments in quantum physics, developments that suggest that Consciousness might be a non-local phenomenon rather than having a mechanistic and "causalistic" basis (see for example Insinna, 1996; Limar, 2011; Ponte & Schäfer, 2013).

Fritz Perls

Perls introduced psychoanalytic notions and ideas into the realm of Humanistic Psychotherapy. His Gestalt Psychology, by concentrating in the "here and now", described dreams as the "royal road to integration". Perls' theory of dreaming can therefore be seen as an expansion of Jung's. However, whereas for Jung every person in a dream can be seen as an aspect of the dreamer, Perls argued that even inanimate objects may represent aspects of the dreamer. Dreams are existential messages, and by working with them people can reclaim the lost parts of the personality and become whole (Perls, 1969).

Perls differed from Freud and Jung in that he viewed dream symbolism as a personal creation rather than part of a universal symbolic language. It is therefore connected with the individual's life experiences. Since dreams represent unfinished emotional business, he developed role-play exercises where dreamers can develop their own interpretation (Perls, 1971).

Appendix 5
Information Sheet and Consent Form

Initiator: Lina Mangiorou
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Address: University of Wolverhampton, Psychology Division, Millennium City Building, Stafford Street, WV1 1SB
Supervisors: Dr Yvette Lewis and Dr Nicola Hart

Exploring dreams

Thank you very much for considering helping with this research project. As part of my training in Counselling Psychology, I am forming a group, where all participants will be equal members and share a passion for the study of dreams. The purpose of the group will be to explore some mutually agreed aspects of dreaming by taking some actions in our everyday lives. It is hoped that the group will be permeated by values of autonomy, respect and collaboration.

How will I be involved?
An introductory meeting will be arranged where the nature of co-operative research will be discussed. You will have the opportunity to take part in defining the topic we will be investigating, to make arrangements for meetings and take an informed decision as to whether you wish to join the group.
I expect that the group will meet 6-10 times, of approximately 2 hours each. In addition, any agreed actions and practical skills could be carried in our daily life, and the outcomes will be recorded.
The final report, although written and owned by the initiator, will be the product of all co-participants, and as such it will be circulated to members of the group for comments, feedback and alterations.

What's in it for members of the group?
You will have the opportunity to explore your dreaming and waking experience in a group setting and hopefully learn from this experience. You may also be contributing to the development of therapeutic methods and the wider debate on the nature of consciousness (in other words, what is it like to be human).
Membership in the group can form part of continuing professional and personal development, with the potential for publication and joint authorship of papers. In such an event, the preferences and disclaimers of individuals should be respected, and consent should be sought from all group members prior to publication.
Please note that this is not a therapeutic group. Dreams that cause you profound distress will be excluded from the conversation. It is each member's responsibility to flag to the group when a particular topic is causing distress, and if you so wish I can indicate appropriate services for therapeutic support.

What about confidentiality?
If you wish, your contribution will be gratefully acknowledged. If however you wish to be anonymous, all information and details given will be treated in strict confidence. All identifying information will be removed or altered, according to your wishes, and pseudonyms will be used. Any records of the meetings will be stored securely under the Data Protection Act (1998) and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

Can I withdraw my consent?
Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw consent at any time without giving a reason. If you are happy for your contributions to be used in the final report, you will have the opportunity to sign a consent form at the end of each meeting.

- I confirm that I participated in the introductory meeting, where I had the opportunity to clarify issues of concern (including confidentiality and ownership of the project) and to influence the project design and the contract.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and I consent.

Co-researcher's Name:

Signature:

Date:

Initiator's Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 6
End of meeting Consent form

Human Inquiry: Exploring the unmapped territory of dreaming
Initiator: Lina Mangiorou
Supervisors: Dr Nicola Hart & Dr Yvette Lewis

Thank you very much for participating in today's meeting. I would like to ask you for your agreement in using the data we generated as a group today. Although you will have the opportunity to give your feedback and consent to the final report, this is merely to cover me in case you have to withdraw from the inquiry earlier than anticipated and due to unforeseen circumstances.

I consent to Lina Mangiorou using my contribution in today's meeting in her Doctorate and in other publication.
I understand that this material will be kept under the Data Protection Act
I understand that my material will be treated subject to the following conditions:
(XXX)

Name:
Signature:
Date:

Appendix 7
University of Wolverhampton Ethical approval

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CLICK ON THE SURNAME TO EDIT THE RECORD
Search Again Order By: ----ORDER BY---- Firstname Supervisor Date of
Ethics board Reference Number: 862 Surname:Mangiorou First Name:Lina Type:Postgraduate Supervisor:
Project Title:Human Inquiry: Ex;ploring the unmapped
of dreaming Category:A Date of initial Ethics board:21/11/2008 Initial Verdict:Chair's Action Date of
Behavioural Sciences EC where revised application
considered: Revised Verdict: Date of approval by Behavioural Sciences EC of revised version: Date of
notification to School:02/11/2009 Date of final approval:04/11/2009
Search Again
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Appendix 8
Email outlining ethical recommendations

RES20A – Human Inquiry: Exploring the unmapped territory of dreaming
Investigator: Lina Mangiorou
Supervisors: Dr Nicola Hart & Dr Yvette Lewis

1. Information consent sheets considered non-standard. Both forms too dense and full of jargon making interpretation by non-specialists difficult. Forms need to be more straightforward. Plainer language required.
2. Possibility of recovered memory and therefore possibility of distress. If proposal remains as Res20a, some boundary conditions required.
3. Joint authorship of papers could undermine confidentiality. Investigator should reflect on this and discuss with supervisor.
4. Membership could be changed slightly to counterbalance the withdrawal of some participants due to illness etc. Consent could be obtained at end of each session to enable acquired data to be used if one participant withdraws. Investigator advised not to personalise by using network of acquaintances.
5. Framework endorsed with first stage as Res20a, and second stage as a Res20b if necessary.

CHAIR'S ACTION

Appendix 9
Some hints which people have found useful for remembering dreams

1. On going to sleep, imagine your mind as an empty TV screen, waiting for a programme to be projected on to it.

2. Suggest to yourself that you are going to have at least one dream and remember it.

3. Don't open your eyes straight away when you wake up, but let the dream images come back, and go over them.

4. When you feel that this recall is complete, move to another position in which you normally sleep, and more images may come back.

5. Have a paper and pencil handy, and jot down what you can remember straight away. Some people like to use cassette recorders instead of pen and paper.

6. Be sure not to miss out any unusual scenes and any words, particularly unfamiliar words or phrases, which might have come from a dream. These can be particularly important and revealing.

7. It is better not to open your eyes, and it is possible to learn to write with your eyes closed. Some people have even bought boards with wires across, as used by blind people, to make sure they write in straight lines.

8. Record dreams in the order in which you recall them. Don't try to work out which came first in the night.

Provided by Dr John Rowan, personal communication 19 Nov 2007

Appendix 10
Questions, propositions and some corresponding accounts in introductory workshop

How does waking life affect dreams, or, how are moods affected by dreams?	"*It sounds like a practical thing to do, I mean, there's a lot of books, a few dodgy ones that I've seen, just someone's opinion about what dreams about ducks, chickens or sunshine might mean, it's just a personal interpretation I'm sure, so, if we could actually look how moods are affected, or how moods affect dreams or vice versa, that maybe a really interesting, interesting angle to look at that from*." (Damon, 00:00:46.71) "*...I know what mood I'm in before I actually wake up and get up, I know it's been affected by dreaming… even though I'm fully conscious while I'm dreaming, it does create a mood response*" (Damon, 00:46:09.96) "*Because I know that if I've been playing something on X Box, then, my dream is in the setting of whatever the game was about*" (Kenneth, 00:26:44.95)
How do dreams and reality blur? The fine differences between a conscious and a dreaming state Believing you are awake when you are not	"*… dreams and reality kind of blur. Like last night I dreamed that I was having a conversation with somebody and I thought... I realised that something was kind of fishy because I was partly awake and was in the room, and I could see around the room, but then I realised that he's probably not here! Because that guy lives in Germany and I'm not actually friends with John Cleese!!!*" (Kenneth, 00:05:15.38)
Meditation and mindfulness in relation to awareness in dreaming and waking life	"*Unless you're experienced in deep meditation or practice things like that... I don't mean transcendental stuff or anything, just simple meditation, it's very rare we actually become the observers of ourselves*." (Damon 00:08:00.39) "*…to observe our own analytical part of our brain or our thinking selves not as a separate entity but just as a small part of ourselves... and I guess that it's that part of us that it's going to sleep or just waking up, this kind of a cross-over point where... the robot takes over and the thinking/analytical part of our brain turns off for the day so we can actually get out of bed and tie our shoes and make coffee*

	and staff and go to work. So, it's a nice transition point where if it's not a conscious observation, then it's certainly an interesting place to be when we're waking up or shutting down" (Damon, 00:08:23.16)
Transitional point or "crossover" from waking to sleeping state Dreams being more vivid while waking up or falling asleep	"[If I take more notice of daydreams] *it would encourage me to remember the night dreams as well*." (Betty, 00:12:05.25) "*I had a whole series of them [dreams] as I was waking up […] hitting snooze about 20 times, I find it gives a kind of in-between dreams state, where you're just drifting in and out of reality and a light dream state. Perhaps we don't remember what we dream, if we're dreaming in deep sleep, but certainly just as you're waking up or just as you're nodding off at night, it seems to be a time when dreams can start firing off. So, I had a whole series of them this morning that were quite bizarre, and I was aware that I was dreaming the whole time*" (Damon, 00:06:53.55)
	"*It makes sense to me this crossover, your conscious mind wakes up and you're becoming more aware*." (Lina, 00:09:02.22)
	"*In the crossover dreams can become more vivid.*" (Lina, 00:09:02.32)
Bizarre dreams that somehow seem "normal" until the light of day	"*I just find really strange with dreams where... these really bizarre things happen, but it seems as though it's a normal thing when you're dreaming! You don't think of it as bizarre, it just seems normal, but when you think about it, afterwards, it's absolutely bizarre*!" (Peter, 00:06:17.92)
Similarities and differences between daydreams and dreams	"*I remember my dreams usually between phases of sleeping and being awake as well. I tend to have dreams then. But then my question will be what's the difference between that experience and the daydreams? Because, that's an interesting aspect for me because I am quite often aware of having dreams while I am fully awake, and I'm conscious that it's not my mind just going off on one. I'm actually having pictures and everything as if I was dreaming!*" (Betty, 00:09:26.76)
Dreaming of the past	"*I have done* [dreamt of the past] *When I was a kid I used to have a specific* [routine on] *Saturdays, I could be eating fish fingers or*

	maybe watching Dr Who and stuff, the sports report... On a Saturday afternoon I knew that was going on. I'd have the flavour of those days [in my dream]. *Perhaps a smell*." (Damon, 00:15:28.93)
	"*I find dreams of past experiences but not the actual experience itself, as if I'm back there but something different is happening. So, it feels as if I'm in the past, but not actually going over something that's happened or something I can recognise that may have happened*." (Peter, 00:16:23.06)
	"*No, I never had a replay of events*" (Lina, 00:14:16.06)
	"*I never have dreams about the past. I don't think I've ever had a dream that I can remember, where I've dreamt about something that has happened!*" "*Themes from the past, maybe, but not actual situations*" (Betty, 00:14:35.39 & 00:15:01.59)
Timelessness	"*That's a very interesting aspect for me, with dreams, dreams and time. The past, the future, and this kind of... timelessness of dreams. And I think it does link with the premonitions as well*." (Lina, 00:17:03.03)
	"*I presume Jung did a lot of work on dreams and dream time and stuff, and there might be some interesting stuff about aboriginal dream time, as they call it. Which is actually their base reality, isn't it? Well, waking time*." (Damon, 00:22:17.66)
Premonitions	"*Sometimes you might have a dream and then the situation might happen two days later, and you're quite aware that you had that dream and that this is happening*." (Betty, 00:17:27.10)
	"*I mean, with us also looking at the word 'premonition' from just one point of view, isn't it? And that's in a kind of a psychic way of looking at premonition, and surely premonition can be a logical presupposition of events*." (Damon, 00:19:52.05)

	"*That's alright, you probably picked that alright, yeah* [that I am sceptical about premonitions]" (Samuel, 00:19:25.64)
Relationship between "déjà vu" experiences and dreaming	"*…when you're awake and you have that sense of déjà vu, like "oh, I've been here before" or "I've done this" or "I've had this conversation before!"*" "*And I've always wondered whether you might have dreamt it, but you probably don't remember the dream*" (Betty, 00:18:28.82 & 00:18:43.35)
Repeated themes in dreams / therapeutic aspects	"*If there are repeating themes in our personal life that get reflected in our dreams and we might find even closure or some kind of benefit from getting this stuff out. We might find ways to help each other out in certain ways. It could be interesting really!*" (Damon, 00:58:38.56)
Dream interpretation/ therapeutic aspects of dreams	"*There is a lot of books, a few dodgy ones that I've seen, just someone's opinion about what dreams about ducks, chickens or sunshine might mean, but it's just a personal interpretation I'm sure*" (Damon, 00:00:46.71)
	"*I think dreams and being in this kind of environment* [of supportive collaboration] *can help you move forward*" (Lina, 01:00:08.70)
Day residue Environmental/ Waking time factors affecting dreams	"[dreams] *are more vivid when I have been playing a game, like obsessively, and I do tend to have a lot of dreams featuring the game*." (Betty, 00:28:10.14)
	"*I've been obsessed with games like that, it's not good. And your sleep is not good."* (Lina, 00:29:00.50)
	"*If I had been playing a game, when I'm trying to get sleep I think can stop here by machine guns and explosions and what not, even though when I actually dream, it isn't about that. I have difficulty getting to sleep because I can hear these bombs… but my actual dreams aren't about that*!" (Phil, 00:31:06.13 & 00:31:30.26)
	"*from the previous day... I do tend to dream some things and people. It seems to me as if my mind is trying to put them all together"* (Lina, 00:14:16.06)
	"*I presume we all read newspapers and watch*

	standard amounts of TV and world news. We all go shopping, same kind of supermarkets and stuff. It would be interested to see if these environmental factors can have an effect in that we all dream similar-ish things maybe" (Damon, 00:31:31.31)
Inducing dreams	"*It would be interesting if you could implant an idea into someone, like...* *...if I said to you, "tonight, you will dream about a duck!*"" (Betty, 00:39:38.25 & 00:39:42.36) "*We'll get there though!* [inducing dreams] *That's why I was on about environmental factors and TV, and world media and things, because I actually do believe you can*!" (Damon, 00:39:43.64) "*We should dream about that. Dream up a team name*!" (Betty, 00:53:33.89)
Lucid dreaming- becoming aware within the dream that we are dreaming	"*…now that we've actually made that conscious decision to start remembering dreams, it would be interesting to see the effect on the dreams themselves, if we're actually conscious while we're dreaming that we're trying to remember them, or... if we actually have to wake up in the dream, become more conscious that we're dreaming because of it*!" (Damon, 00:04:19.27) "*...personally I'm always conscious during my dreams, I always know I'm dreaming, that comes through practicing certain things*" (Damon, 00:04:50.17)
Questioning within the dream whether we are dreaming Pre-lucid dream state	"*…not so much the realizing that you're dreaming, but the bit before you realize you're dreaming, when it's all just a... and you're certain you're awake, but you're actually not*" (Kenneth, 00:06:04.75)
Picking up dreams from where we left them	"*But then the weirdest bit is that when I start to wake up, and I think, actually that* [in the dream] *was very cool, I want to finish that and then go back! And resume!*" (Kenneth, 00:26:45.55) "*…resume where you left off and go back to the scene that was the influence by the game, and go back to wherever you've been doing then*" (Kenneth, 00:26:47.42)

Table *Questions, propositions and some corresponding accounts*

Appendix 11
Techniques to facilitate lucid dreaming

Email sent Tue, 9 March, 2010 19:52:14

I took the following techniques on inducing lucid dreaming from Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucid_dreamhttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucid_dreaming - Induction_methods. The link also has a lot of other useful information if you are interested. I also attach a book on lucid dreaming: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ef/Lucid_Dreaming.pdf

Reality testing

Reality testing (or reality checking) is a common method used by people to determine whether or not they are dreaming. It involves performing an action and observing if the results are consistent with results which would be expected in a state of wakefulness. By practicing these tests during waking life, one may eventually decide to perform such a test while dreaming, which may fail and let the dreamer realize that they are dreaming.

- The pain test: The dreamer does a simple action that would cause pain, like pinching themself, and seeing if they experience any pain. If they do not, they know that they are dreaming. This is one of the most common reality checks, hence the popular culture reference "pinch me, I think I'm dreaming".
- The hand reality check: The dreamer looks at their hands and they may appear to have more or less than five fingers.
- The nose reality check: The dreamer pinches their nose shut and if they are able to breathe without using their nose, it is a dream.[37]
- Sticking one's finger through the palm of one's hand.[37]
- Looking at one's digital watch (remembering the time), looking away, and looking back. As with text, the time will probably have changed randomly and radically at the second glance or contain strange letters and characters. (Analog watches do not usually change in dreams, while digital watches and clocks have a great tendency to do so.)[38] A digital watch or clock may feature strange characters or the numbers all out of order.
- Flipping a light switch. Light levels rarely change as a result of the switch flipping in dreams.[39]
- Looking into a mirror; in dreams, reflections from a mirror often appear to be blurred, distorted, incorrect, or frightening.[39]
- Looking at the ground beneath one's feet or at one's hands. If one does this within a dream the difference in appearance of the ground or one's hands from the normal waking state is often enough to alert the conscious to the dream state.[40]
- If you listen to music while you sleep, listen to see if the lyrics are changed or if the tempo (or speed) of the song changes.[citation needed]

A more precise form of reality testing involves examining the properties of dream objects to judge their apparent reality. Some lucid dreamers report that dream objects when examined closely have all the sensory properties, stability, and detail of objects in the physical world. Such detailed observation relates to whether mental objects and environments could effectively act as substitutes for the physical environments with the dreamer unable to see significant differences between the two. This has implications for those who claim there is a spiritual or supernatural world that might be accessible through out of body experience or after death

Appendix 12
Intentionality, counselling psychology, and the wider science of consciousness

Malle (2010) argues that intentionality is the central concept of folk psychology as it allows people to make sense of human behaviour in terms of mental states. Rollo May (1969/2007) defined intentionality as "*the structure which gives meaning to experience*" (p.223), the bridge between subjective and objective reality. So, and assuming that psychotherapy is concerned with changing meaning and the ways we direct our awareness, intentionality becomes a key concept in Counselling Psychology. It would seem that since Brentano revived the term as the defining characteristic of consciousness in 1874 (Brentano, 1874/1973), and Rollo May called for its incorporation in academic psychology's studies in 1965, research remains limited. Our findings indicate that intentionality may be an important focus in therapy and in research, one that if neglected may lead to impoverished understandings and practice.

Our dreams not only transformed through the inquiry, but also included aspects of the process. Other co-inquirers, our emotions and anxieties in relation to the unfolding process, all made an appearance in our dreams. Thus, the question that arises is "are we discovering reality or co-creating it?". To quote Heisenberg (1958; p. 58) "*What we observe is not nature itself, but nature is exposed to our method of questioning*". What we wonder about transforms the way in which reality presents itself to us.

In similar lines, Lola very aptly pointed out that the important part is the question and *how* this question is asked (00:36:41.06, third reflection phase), and so restated the problem of modern physics: "*The question is what is the question*?" (Wheeler, quoted in Levy, 2014). It is of no wonder then that physicists are at a loss when investigating quantum phenomena.

In antithesis, our practice as counselling psychologists is founded on the knowledge of the power that our interactions hold: we are accustomed to the notion that it is the intersubjective reality in the counselling room that brings forth change. What quantum physics now affirms, is that it is this act of perception, intentionality, that creates the existence of whatever it is that is being perceived: we are always partial agents, always participating in the world, and we create dynamically our reality with the questions we ask and the procedures we undertake.

What is therefore implied, is that the world of material substances is disappearing before our eyes and is replaced by a world of interactive relationships, actions, events and processes: consciousness is no longer an epiphenomenon of matter but the "*ontological ground and driving force of the process of reality itself*" (Levy, 2014; p.24). Just like within a dream the act of perception creates its' being, so the nature of our reality is dreamlike. As Betty declared: "*The Self, the experience of the Self that happens in the dream, is actually more* ***real****, than what the 'true' Self actually is.* […] *Life is what happens in the instant,* ***now****, time isn't linear!"* (Fifth reflection phase, 00:19:31.11).

Indeed, quantum physics turns our conception of linear time and causality on its head: Our knowledge is a state of mind and the act of observation changes the present state of the universe, it reaches backwards in time and changes what we can say about the past (Levy, 2014). Such a conception sheds a different light to our traditional "cause and effect" explanations of Lola's precognitive dream experiences (Fig. 3.4 & Lola, 00:58:52.06, second phase).

Coming to terms with the intrusion of consciousness into the laws of physics is forcing physicists to come to terms with questions of metaphysics- not unlike psychology reluctantly incorporates phenomena that were previously viewed as the realm of parapsychology, such as lucid dreaming. What our findings strongly suggest, is that intentionality is a key concept in the understanding of humans and our relationships, one that should have a central role for therapy to be successful.

Incorporating it into our theories and practice may well mean a radical change in our thinking and the way we understand the world. The mere existence and nature of dreams challenges what we know and our acceptance of the cause-and-effect universe. As Revonsuo suggested "*the radical proposal now is that dreaming ought to be championed as an example of conscious experience, a mascot for scientific investigation in consciousness studies*." (2006, p.86).

I believe that counselling psychology's wealth of knowledge and experience on relational processes, in addition to our phenomenological approach, has a lot to contribute to the wider study of consciousness. After all, consciousness is a problem that transcends traditional boundaries of scientific organization and is rapidly becoming a worldwide and interdisciplinary phenomenon (Center for Consciousness studies, 2014). So, perhaps in the future we may be working closely with professionals of other disciplines.

Appendix 13
Dichotomy in western thinking and intentionality as a bridge

Adopting a co-operative inquiry poses a significant challenge not only for research and psychotherapy, but also for our positioning in the wider socio-political context. The belief that research into the human condition should be carried out by those doing the experiencing implies that everyone can be a researcher and that research is not the exclusive preserve of academics. The question "are academics able to 'let go' and share their position as researchers?" has been asked before (Oates, 2002; p. 34). The question raised by our inquiry is "are we ready to take the responsibility and become researchers in the absence of an authority?" The challenge is one of authentic immersion in life. As F. Perls stated: "*To suffer one's death and to be reborn is not easy*." (1971; opening flyleaf). This is a challenge that we face as researchers, therapists, and in all our relationships as human beings when we claim to truly respect the rights and experiences of others.

In addition, the history of western thinking is one of dichotomies defined by our belief that an outside world exists objectively and independently from us. This tradition has a powerful grip over our culture, and our inquiry mirrored and reproduced it: a number of dichotomies appeared in our interactions, made our collaboration challenging, and reflected the ongoing debates in the wider society and the literature on dreaming. Thus, the initial problems in theory and research were reproduced in our inquiry.

The dichotomies that emerged from our interactions were numerous: spirituality versus science, reductive materialism versus subjective experience, solipsism versus subjective realism, the "paranormal" versus scepticism, spiritual "knowing" versus reasoning.

These dichotomies are contrasting but also have a dialectical relationship; it is through these that we can make sense of our world. The big challenge that faces us as Counselling Psychologists and as humans at the present time is how to integrate these seemingly opposing and conflicting aspects, the dichotomies that stem from our belief that we exist in separation from the outside world. As quantum physics teaches us, the separation between subjective and objective reality is untenable (Heitler). Intentionality may well prove to be the bridge between subjective and objective reality, just like Rollo May argued in 1969 (May, 1969/2007).